

## THE ORPHANS FROM THE ALMS-HOUSE.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

[ Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1854, by Edward Stephens, in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.]

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## CHAPTER XIII.

It was the day before uncle Nathan's husking frolic. All the corn was housed and stocked upon the barn floor, which had been swept and garnished for the occasion, for after the husking was to come a dance—not in the house, aunt Hannah had some old-fashioned prejudices about that—and uncle Nat shrunk from the idea of having a frolic in the out-room where poor Anna had died, so as the barn was large and the room sufficient, the play usually ended where the work began upon the barn floor, which was always industriously cleared from the corn-stalks as the husking went on.

Of course it was a busy day at the old house. Salina came early, and was in full force among the culinary proceedings of the kitchen. Aunt Hannah received a slight exhilaration of life, she moved about the kitchen more briskly, let her cap get somewhat awry, and twice in the course of the morning was seen to smile grimly as Mary, in her active desire to please, brought the flour-duster and nutmeg-grater to her help before the rigid lady had quite found out that they were wanted. Uncle Nat too acted in a very excited and extraordinary manner, all day running in from the porch, asking breathlessly if he could do anything, and then subsiding back into his old arm-chair before aunt Hannah could force her thin lips into a speaking condition.

As for Salina, though her tongue was always ready, she had found the old man too dull of comprehension for any thought of taking help at his hands, and when he meekly offered to cut up a huge pumpkin for her, she paused with her knife plunged deep into its golden heart, and informed dear, unconscious uncle Nathan that she did not require help from the face of man, not she.

With that she cut down into the pumpkin with a ferocity quite startling, and split the two halves apart with a force that made the horn comb reel among her fiery tresses, and sent uncle Nat quite aghast through the back door. Salina looked

after him with a smile of grim triumph, snuffed the air like a victorious race-horse, and after forcing the half dislodged comb into her hair with both hands, she proceeded to cut up the pumpkin into great yellow hoops, with another toss of her head, which denoted intense satisfaction.

It is possible that Salina would have been a little provoked, had she seen with what composure uncle Nat took the rebuff, and how quietly he settled down to a basket of large potatoes by the barn door which he softly cut in twain, scooping each half out in the centre, and cutting off the bottoms with mysterious earnestness. As each potato was finished, uncle Nat fastened it to the edge of a new hogshead hoop that lay on the floor beside him, till the whole circle was dotted with them.

When this mysterious circle was completed, uncle Nat tied a cord to the four divisions of the hoop, and with the aid of a stout ladder suspended it between two high beams in the centre of the barn. Having descended to the floor and taken a general observation of the effect, he was about to mount the ladder again, when Mary Fuller ran in, eager to make herself useful in the barn as well as the house.

"Stop, stop, uncle Nathan, let me go up, while you set down on the corn-stalks and tell me if I place them right. Here now, hand up the candles," she continued, stooping down from the ladder after she had mounted a round or two.

Uncle Nathan drew a bundle of candles from his capacious coat-pocket and reached them up.

"I hope there'll be enough," he said, regretfully, "but somehow Hannah is getting rather close with her candles."

"Plenty—plenty," answered Mary Fuller, "we'll scatter them about, you know; besides Salina brought over half a dozen nice sperm ones."

"Did she?" said uncle Nathan, heaving a deep sigh, "that's very good of her, especially as she seems to be a little out of sorts lately with us—don't you think so, Mary?"

"Not at all," said Mary, laughing blithely

from the top of the ladder, as she settled the candles each into the potato socket prepared for it, "Salina's cross sometimes, but then it amounts to nothing."

The old man sat down on a bundle of corn-stalks, and quietly gazed upon Mary as she proceeded with her task; but all at once a broad light was let in to the barn through the folding-door that were softly opened.

"Come down—come down, Mary," cried uncle Nat, "some one is coming."

"Oh, it's only me, don't mind me, you know," said a sharp, little weazle-eyed man gliding through the opening, "yes, I see, preparing for the husking frolic. All right, just the thing, labor gives value to everything—of course corn is worth more with the husks off."

At first uncle Nathan seemed a little startled by this abrupt entrance, and Mary came down the ladder with an anxious look in her eyes, for this man was the village constable, and with a vague sense of debts that they did not comprehend, both the old man and the girl received him with something like apprehension. But he clasped both his hands under his coat behind, and looked so complacently first at the corn-stalks, then at uncle Nathan, that it quite reassured the old man; though Mary, who had glided down the ladder, and stood close by his side, still bore an apprehensive look in her eyes.

"Fine corn!" said the constable, breaking off an ear, and stripping the husk carelessly from the golden grain, "the rows are even as a girl's teeth, the grain plump and full as her heart. I say, uncle Nathan, why didn't you invite me to the husking? I'm great on that sort of work."

"Didn't Hannah invite you?" answered uncle Nat, blushing at this implied charge of inhospitality. "If she didn't, I'll do it now, of course we should be glad to have you come—why not?"

"Of course—why not? If I can't dance like some of the young fellows at a regular stand, I'll husk more corn than the best on 'em. See if any of 'em has as big a heap as I do after the husking. Oh, yes, I'll come!"

"What are you coming for?" inquired Mary, in her low, quiet way, fixing her clear eyes on his face.

"To dance with you, of course, and to drink the old man's cider—what else should I come for, little bob o' link?"

"I don't know," answered Mary, with a faint sigh, which uncle Nat did not hear, he was busy gathering himself up from his low seat on the bundle of stalks.

"Won't you step in and take a drink of cider now?" said the kind old man to his visitor.

"No, thank you; but this evening, you may depend on it, I'll be among you."

As he said this, constable Boyd put on his hat, settled it a little on one side, and thrusting a hand into each pocket of his coat, walked with great dignity toward the door.

A yoke of oxen, fat, sleek, old homestead animals, lay in the grass a little distance from the barn.

"Fine yoke of cattle them," said the constable, sauntering toward them, "fat enough to kill a'most, ain't they?"

"I fed them myself," answered uncle Nathan, patting a white star on the forehead of the nearest animal, as he lay upon his knees half buried in the rich aftergrowth. "Isn't he an old beauty?"

"Kind in the yoke?" questioned the constable.

"I should think so!" answered uncle Nat, with a mellow laugh. "Come go in and see how the women folks get along."

"No, thank you, I'll just take a short out across the garden; but you may depend on me to-night—good day."

"Good day," said uncle Nat, with his usual hearty manner, and, picking up a fragment of pine, he moved with it toward the porch.

A barrel of new cider had been mounted on the cheese-press. It was evidently just beginning to ferment, for drops were foaming up from the bung, and creaming down each side the barrel in two slender rivulets.

Uncle Nathan drove the bung down with his clenched hand. Then seating himself comfortably in the old arm-chair, took a double-bladed knife from his pocket, and began with great neatness to whittle out a spigot from the fragment of pine, sighing heavily now and then as if some unaccountable pressure were on his mind. Aunt Hannah crossed the porch once or twice on her way to the milk-room; and at each time uncle Nat ceased whittling and gazed wistfully after her. Once he parted his lips to speak, but that moment Salina came to the kitchen door with a quantity of apple-pairings gathered up in her apron, and called out, "Miss Hannah, do come alone with that calendar, the pumpkin sarse will be biled dry as a chip—where on arth is Mary Fuller?"

"Here," answered Mary, in a low voice, coming down from her chamber.

Had Salina looked up she might have seen that Mary's eyes were heavy and moist, as if she had been weeping, but the strong-minded maiden had emptied her apron, and sat with a large earthen bowl in her lap, beating a dozen eggs tempestuously together, as if they had given

her mortal offence, and she were taking revenge with every dash of her hand.

"Throw a stick or two of wood into the oven, Mary, that's a good girl, then take these eggs and beat them like all possessed, while I roll out the gingerbread and cut some broke leaves in the pie crust. Aunt Hannah now always will cut the leaves all the way of a size, as if any one with half an eye couldn't see that it isn't the way they grow by nature, but broad at the bottom and tapering off like an injun aroun at the top. Besides, Mary, it's between us, you know, aunt Hannah never does make her thumb marks even about the edges, but Nathan, now I dare say, don't know the difference between her work and a leaf like that."

Salina had resigned her bowl while speaking, and was now lifting up the transparent upper crust of a pie in which she had cut a leaf, through which the light gleamed as if it had been hair work.

"Look a there now, Mary Fuller, I shouldn't be a bit surprised if he never noticed the difference between this and that outlandish concern;" here Salina pointed, with a grum smile, to a neatly covered pie which aunt Hannah had left ready for the oven, and added, with a profound sigh, which arose from that want of appreciation which is said to be the hunger of genius, "there's no use of exerting one's-self when nobody seems to mind it."

With these words Salina spread down the crust of her pie, and lifting the platter on one hand out around it with a flourish of the case-knife, and began pinching the edges with a determined pressure of the lips, as if she had quite made up her mind that every pressure of her thumb should leave an indentation in uncle Nat's insensible heart.

"There," she said, pushing the pie against that of aunt Hannah's, "see if any one knows the difference between that and that—I know they won't—there now!"

This was said defiantly, as if she expected Mary to contradict her, but the young girl sat languidly beating the eggs, lost in thought, something very sad seemed to have come over her.

"Humph!" said Salina, snuffing the air, "what's the use talking!" and seizing the rolling-pin, she began with both hands to press out a broad plot of gingerbread, proceeded to cut it up into square cords, which she marked in stripes with the back of her knife. Just then aunt Hannah came from the out-room rapidly, and with a strange look in her usually cold eyes.

"Goodness gracious, what's the matter now?" cried the strong-minded maiden, pointing her

case-knife toward the old lady, "one would think she'd seen a bear! what is it now, do tell?"

Aunt Hannah did not reply, but sat down in uncle Nat's armed-chair in silence. Mary looked up with a strange confusion in her eyes; she fancied that the cause of aunt Hannah's agitation might be the same that had filled her own mind with forebodings, and her look was eloquent of sympathy.

Salina failing to obtain an answer, rushed into the out-room, still grasping her knife, and thrust her head out of the window. A travelling carriage was passing rather slowly, which contained three persons, two ladies and a gentleman. The ladies leaned forward, looking toward the house. Never were two faces more strongly contrasted than those; the elder, pale, withered and thin, glanced out from a rather showy travelling bonnet for an instant, and was drawn back again; the other, dark, sparkling and beautiful, was turned with a look of eager interest toward the house, and as Salina gazed after the carriage, a little gloved hand was waved toward her, as if a recognition or adieu were intended.

"Well now, I never did, if that isn't—no—yes—goodness me—it is Miss Farnham!"

Back ran the maiden to the kitchen, untying her apron as she went. She flung the case-knife upon the table, and began vigorously dusting the flour from her hands.

"Where's my own bonnet, where's my shawl, I must be going—aunt Hannah, now do guess who was in that are carriage."

"I know," answered the old woman, in a hoarse voice.

Mary Fuller sat motionless, with her eager eyes on Salina and her lips gently parted. Thus she looked the question her lips refused to utter.

"Yes, it's them, Mary. The old woman, Mr. James and——"

"And Isabel—is with them."

"Well, I suppose it's her; by the way, she put out her hand, but she's grown as beautiful as a fairy, light and blooming, I can tell you. Now good day, don't let them pies burn or have them underdone at the bottom. I'll try and run over to-night; but you mustn't depend on me; every thing is uncertain where Miss Farnham is."

Away went Salina through the out-room and into the street, long before aunt Hannah arose from her easy chair, or Mary Fuller could conquer the joyous trepidation in which she had been thrown. The strong-minded maiden had disappeared along the curving shore of the river. After awhile aunt Hannah arose and went on with her preparation, but in silence,

and with a degree of nervous haste that Mary had never witnessed in her before.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE barn was a vast rustic bower that night. One end was heaped with corn ready for husking; the floor was neatly swept; and overhead the rafters were concealed by heavy garlands of white pine, golden maple leaves, and red oak branches, that swept from the roof downward like a tent. Butternut leaves wreathed their clustering gold among the dark green hemlock and pine, while sumack leaves shot richly through the gorgeous masses of forest leaves. The rustic chandelier was in full blaze, while now and then a candle gleamed out through the garlands, starring them to the roof. Still, the illumination was neither broad nor bold, but shed a delicious starlight through the barn, that left much to the imagination, and concealed a thousand little signs of love-making that would have been ventured on more slyly had the light been broader.

But the candles were aided by a host of sparkling eyes. The air was warm and rich with laughter and pleasant nonsense, banded from group to group amid the rustling of corn-husks and the dash of golden ears, as they fell upon the heap that swelled larger and larger with every passing minute.

Uncle Nathan's great armed-chair had been placed in the centre of the barn, just beneath the heap of lights. There he sat, ruddy and smiling, the very impersonation of a ripe harvest, with an iron fire-shovel fastened in some mysterious manner across his seat, a splint basket between his knees, and working away with an energy that brought the perspiration to his forehead like rain. Up and down across the sharp edge of the shovel he drew the slender corn, sending a shower of golden kernels into the basket with every pull of his arms, and stooping now and then with a well pleased smile to even down the corn as it rose higher and higher in his basket.

Our old friend Salina sat at a little distance, with her fiery tresses rolled in upright puffs over each temple, and her great horn-comb flourishing therein like a battlement. A calico gown, with very gay colors straggling over it, like honeysuckles and buttercups on a hill side, adorned her lofty person, leaving a trim foot visible upon a bundle of stalks just within range of uncle Nat's eye. Not that Salina intended it, or that uncle Nat had any particular regard for neatly clad feet, but your strong-minded woman

has an instinct which is sure to place the few charms sparsely distributed to the class, in conspicuous relief on all occasions.

As Salina sat perched on the base of the cornstock, tearing away vigorously at the husks, she cast an admiring glance now and then on the old man as his head rose and fell to the motion of his hands; but that glance was directly withdrawn with a snarl; for uncle Nat's eyes never once turned on that trim foot with its calf-skin shoe, much less to its owner, who began to be a little exasperated, as maidens of her class will when their best points are overlooked.

"Humph!" muttered the maiden, looking down at her calico, "one might as well have come with a linsey-woolsey frock on for what any body cares." Seizing, as she spoke, an ear of corn by the dead silk, she rent away the entire husk at once; and lo! a long, plump red ear appeared, the very thing that half a dozen of the prettiest girls on the stalk-heap had been searching and wishing for all the evening!

This discovery was hailed with a shout. The possession of a red ear, according to the established usage of all husking parties, entitled every gentleman present to a kiss from the holder.

The barn rang again with the clamor of voices and shouts of merry laughter. There was a general crashing down of ears upon the corn heap. The roguish girls, that had failed in finding the red ear, all abandoned work and began dancing over the stalk-heap like mad things, clapping their hands and sending shout after shout of mellow laughter, ringing cheerily among the starlit evergreens overhead.

But the young men, after the first wild shout, remained unusually silent, looking sheepishly on each other with a shy unwillingness to commence duty. No one seemed willing to be first, and this very awkwardness set the girls off like mad again.

There sat Salina, amid the merry din, brandishing the red ear in her hand, with a grum smile upon her mouth, as if prepared for a desperate defence.

"What's the matter, why don't you begin?" cried a pretty, black-eyed piece of mischief, from the top of the stalk-heap, "why, before this time, I thought you would have been snatching kisses by handful."

"I'd like to see them try, that's all!" said the strong-minded female, sweeping a glance of scornful defiance over the young men.

"Now, Joseph Nash, are you agoing to stand that?" cried the pretty piece of mischief, to a handsome young fellow that had haunted her neighborhood all the evening; "afraid to fight for a kiss, are you?"

"No, not exactly!" said Joseph, rolling back his wristbands and settling himself in his clothes, "it's the after-clap, if I shouldn't happen to please," he added, in a whisper, that brought his lips so close to the cheek of his fair tormentor, that he absolutely gathered toll from its pearly bloom before starting on his pilgrimage, a toll that brought the glow still more richly to her face. The maiden, laughing till the tears sparkled in her eyes, pushed him toward Salina in revenge. But Salina lost no time in placing herself on the defensive. She started up, flung the bundle of stalks on which she had been seated at the head of her assailant, kicked up a tornado of loose husks with her trim foot, and stood brandishing her red ear furiously, as if it had been a dagger to play Lady Macbeth with, rather than inoffensive food for chickens.

"Keep your distance, Joe Nash; keep clear of me, now I tell you; I ain't afraid of the face of man; so back out of this while you've chance, you can't kiss me, I tell you, without you are a good deal stronger than I be!"

"I shan't—shan't I?" answered Joe, who was reinforced by half a dozen laughing youngsters, all eager for a frolic; "well I never did take a stump from a gal in my life, so here goes for that are kiss."

Joe bounded forward as he spoke, and made a snatch at Salina with his great hands; but, with the quickness of a deer, she sprang aside, leaving her black silk apron in his grasp. Another plunge, and down came the ear of corn across his head, rolling a shower of red kernels among his thick brown hair.

But Joe had secured his hold, and after another dash, that broke her ear of corn in twain, Salina was left defenceless, with nothing but her two hands to fight with; but these she plied with great vigor, leaving long, crimson marks upon her assailant's cheeks with every blow, till in very self-defence he was compelled to lessen the distance between her face and his, thus receiving her assault upon his shoulders.

To this day it is rather doubtful if Joe Nash really did gather the fruits of his victory. If he did, no report was ever made satisfactory to the eager ring of listeners; and Salina passed away from him with an air of ineffable disdain, as if her defeat had been deprived of its just reward. But the red ear gave rights to more than one, and in her surprise Salina was taken unawares by some who had no roguish black eyed lady-loves laughing behind them. There was no doubt in the matter now. Salina paid her penalty more than once, and with a degree of resignation that was really charming to be-

hold. Once or twice she was seen in the midst of the *melee*, to cast quick glances toward uncle Nathan, who sat in his easy-chair laughing till the tears streamed down his cheeks. When there rose a loud clamor of cries and laughter for uncle Nathan to claim his share of the fun, Salina declared that "she gave up, that she was out of breath, that she couldn't expect to hold her own with a child of three years old." In truth, she made several strides toward the centre of the barn, covering the movement with great generalship by an attempt to gather up her hair and fasten the comb in securely, which was generous and womanly, considering how inconvenient it would have been for uncle Nat to have walked over the mountain of corn-stalks.

"Come, hurry up, uncle Nat, before she catches breath again," cried half a dozen voices, and the girls began to dance and clap their hands like mad things once more. "Uncle Nat—uncle Nat, it's your turn—it's your turn now!"

Uncle Nathan threw the half shelled ear upon the loose corn in his basket, placed a plump hand on each arm of his chair, and lifted himself to a standing posture. He moved deliberately toward the maiden, who was still busy with her lurid tresses. His brown eyes glistened, a broad, bland smile spread and deepened over his face, and stealing one heavy arm around Salina's waist—who gave a little shriek as if quite taken by surprise—he decorously placed a firm and modest salute upon the unresisting—I am not sure that it was not the answering—lips of that strong-minded woman.

How unpleasant this duty may have been to uncle Nat I cannot pretend to say, but there was a genial redness about his face when he turned it to the light, as if it had caught a reflection from Salina's tresses, and his brown eyes were flooded with sunshine as if the whole affair had been rather agreeable than otherwise.

In fact, considering that the old man had been very considerably out of practice in that kind of amusement, uncle Nat acquitted himself famously. When the troop of mischievous girls flocked around, tantalizing him with fresh shouts of laughter and eyes full of mischief, the dear old fellow's eyes brightened with mischief akin to their own. His twinkling eyes turned from face to face as if puzzled which saucy mouth to silence first. But the first stride forward brought him knee deep into the corn-stalks, and provoked a burst of laughter that made the garlands on the rafters tremble again, while away sprang the girls to the very top of the heap, wild with glee and daring him to follow. The tumult aroused Salina. She twisted her hair with a quick sweep

of the hand, thrust the comb in as if it had been a pitch-fork, and darting forward seized uncle Nat by the arm just as he was about to make a second plunge after his pretty tormentors.

Slowly and steadily, the strong-minded female wheeled the defenceless man round till he faced the armed-chair. Then quietly insinuating that "he had better not make an old fool himself more than once a day," she cast a look of scornful triumph upon the crowd of naughty girls and moved back to her place again.

The youngsters now all fell to work more cheerfully for this burst of fun. The stalks rustled, the corn flashed downward, the golden heap grew and swelled to the light, slowly and surely, like a miser's gold. All went merrily. Among those who worked least and laughed the loudest, was the little constable that had taken so deep an interest in the affair that morning. Never did two little ferret eyes twinkle so brightly, or peer more closely into every nook and corner.

Two or three times Mary Fuller entered the barn, whispered a few words to uncle Nat or Salina, and retreated again. At last aunt Hannah appeared, hushing the mirth as she came as night shadows quiet the sunshine. She made a telegraphic sign to Salina, who instantly proceeded to tie on her apron, and communicate with uncle Nathan, who arose from his seat, spreading his hands as if about to bestow a benediction upon the whole company, and desired that the ladies would follow Salina into the house, where they would find a barrel of new cider just tapped in the stoop and some ginger-cake and such things set out in the kitchen. As for the gentlemen, it was always manners for them to wait till the fair sex was served, and besides all hands would be wanted to clear out the barn for a frolic after supper. Moreover, uncle Nat modestly hinted that something a little stronger than cider might be depended on for the young men, after the barn was cleared, an announcement that served to reconcile the sterner portion of the company to their fate better than any argument the old man had used.

Down came the girls like a flock of birds, chatting, laughing, and throwing coquettish glances behind, as they followed Salina from the barn. Up sprang the young men, clearing away stalks, kicking the husks before them in clouds, and carrying them off by arms-full, till a cow house in the yard was choked up with them, and the barn was left with nothing but its evergreen garlands, its starry lights, and a golden heap of corn sloping down from each corner.

Meantime, the bevy of fair girls, full of harmless, frolicsome mirth, and blooming like wild roses, had trooped gaily into the old house.

Aunt Hannah had allowed Mary Fuller to brighten up the rooms with a profusion of autumn flowers, which, though common and coarse, half served to light the table with their freshness and gorgeous colors. A long table, loaded down with every domestic cake or pie known in the country, was stretched the whole length of the out-room. Great plates of dough-nuts, darkly brown, contrasted with golden slices of sponge-cake, gingerbread with its deeper yellow, and a rich variety of seed cakes, each varying in form and tint, and arranged with such natural taste that the effect was beautiful, though little glass and no plate was there to lend a show of wealth.

Little old-fashioned glasses, sparkling with the cider that gave them a deep amber tinge, were ranged down each side the board, and adown the centre ran a line of noble pies. These pies were aunt Hannah's pride and glory. She always arranged them with her own hands in sections, first of golden custard, then of ruby tart, then the dusky yellow of the pumpkin, and then a pie of mince, alternating them thus, till each pie gleamed out like a great massive star, beautiful to look upon and delicious to eat.

Then there was warm short-cake, and cold biscuit; the yellowest and freshest butter, stamped in cakes, with a pair of doves cooing in the centre; and a thousand pretty contrivances that made the table quite like a thing of romance. At the head stood aunt Hannah, cold and solemn, but very attentive, just as they all remembered her from their birth up, with the same rusty dress of levantine silk falling in scant folds down her person, and the same little slate colored shawl folded over her bosom, only with a trifle more grey in her hair and a new wrinkle or so creeping athwart her forehead. There she stood as of old, quietly requesting them one and all to help themselves; while Salina and Mary Fuller flew about, breaking up the mosaic pies, handing butter to this one and cake to that, and really seeming to make their two persons five or six at least, in this eager hospitality.

Aunt Hannah always threw a sort of damp on the young people. Her cold silence chilled them, and that evening there was a shadow so deep upon her aged face, that it seemed almost a frown. Still she exerted herself to be hospitable; but it was of no use; the girls ranged themselves around the table in silence, helped themselves daintily, and conversed in whispers. Salina insisted that this state of things arose

from the absence of the young men, but as she only suggested this in a whisper to Mary Fuller, no one was the worse for her opinion, and after a little there arose a fitful outbreak or two that began to promise cheerfulness.

It certainly was aunt Hannah's presence, for when the girls left the out-room, and trooped up to Mary's chamber, they grew cheerful as birds again; and it was delightful to see them aiding each other in the arrangement of the little finery which was intended to make terrible havoc among the young men's hearts below.

And now there was a flitting to and fro in Mary's room; a listening at the door; and every one was in a flutter of expectation. Pink and blue ribbons floated before the little glass, with

its green crest of asparagus tops red with berries. Now a pair of azure eyes glanced in, then came black ones sparkling with self-admiration. A hundred pretty compliments were bandied back and forth. All was flutter and excitement. For they heard the young men gathering in the supper-room, and joy of joys! the tones of a violin from the back stoop.

You should have seen that group of mountain girls, as each threw herself into some posture of natural grace and listened to that low prelude.

"It is, it is a fiddle—where *did* it come from? a fiddle, a fiddle, how delightful!" and they broke into an impromptu dance, graceful as it was wild.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## MY COUSIN, THE MIDSHIPMAN.

BY E. W. DEWEES.

I HAVE been for many years a wife and mother, and one would have thought my many "family cares and family joys," would have crowded such old memories out of my head; and yet I recall, as though it were but yesterday, the time when cousin Breck entered the navy.

Sister Su has been married longer than I have; yet, often and often, as we sit together, we talk over those old times, and we agree perfectly in thinking there never were, and never can be such glorious times again.

Sister Su and I were very young, I, in fact, a mere child, and, she, though more womanly, not much older, when our parents, who resided in the country, sent us to town for the benefit of better schools. We found a home under my uncle's roof, and I am bound to say we soon made ourselves as much at home as my uncle himself.

For a time after our arrival, things went on quietly enough, for cousin Breck was away from home, either at school or college, I forget which; still we heard a great deal about him. Bertha, his sister, was always talking of him, and from other quarters rumors constantly reached us, to the purport—that Breck was "a first rate fellow, but so wild."

Cousin Bertha, however, thought him perfection, and would hear no whisper against him.

The first time we ever saw cousin Breck, he burst upon us in full splendor—in all the pride and pomp of uniform—a regularly commissioned officer in the United States Navy.

The manner of his advent was characteristic. Su, Bertha and I were sitting in the parlor, which was up stairs, busy with our books or needle-work, when suddenly there rose the confused sound of a scuffle on the stairs, accompanied by a series of small, faint screams, and a loud manly laugh. We rushed to the door just in time to see a strong, athletic young man rushing up the stairs, bearing on one arm the form of poor old Maggy, a woman of sixty, who had spent her life in uncle's family in the capacity of nurse and housekeeper, and who had often carried in her arms the wild boy who now so unceremoniously carried her perforce in his arms.

At the top of the stairs he relinquished his

discomposed burden, and darted upon Su and me.

"So, my pretty cousins, are you not going to speak to your own relation?" and he attempted to claim his cousinly privilege—"Bashful, hey?" he continued, as I shrank back, half frightened, from his boisterous gallantry; for I was a shy little thing, and only thirteen. Bertha and sister Su, who was three years older, met him more on equal terms.

I retreated to a little distance, and slyly observed him from behind the book I was demurely pretending to read.

He was a tall, handsome youth, with bright, twinkling black eyes, sparkling with gaiety—back hair, and a small dark moustache. His age, I suppose, was not more than eighteen or nineteen. He was dressed, as I have said, in full naval uniform, and my eyes rested with great respect on the gilt buttons, and small gilt anchors worked on the ends of the standing collar to his coat.

I made these observations quite unperceived, as I supposed, while he was talking lively nonsense to Su and his sister; but suddenly the mad-cap fellow exclaimed,

"Well, cousin Em, what do you think of me? Do you imagine I don't know that you have been peeping at me over the top of your book this half hour?"

I was overwhelmed. But very soon cousin Breck's cordial gaiety banished my embarrassment, and made me feel quite at my ease with him. Though too timid to take part in the conversation which he was carrying on with Su and Bertha, I was a most admiring and attentive listener; we thought his odd stories, *too*, droll, and a merrier party than we were that night, I would have defied any to find in all America.

As cousin Breck was stationed at the Navy Yard we saw him only occasionally. But come when he would, he made a sensation in the household, I can tell you. Every one, from his lady mother down to the poorest maid in the kitchen, woke to new life. Even the old guitar, unstrung for many a year, was dragged from its dusty case, and forced to abandon its inglorious idleness for the most active service.

Cousin Breck said all the officers played, and



"he'd be shot if he could not do whatever they could, if he *had* never taken a lesson." So at it he went; and certainly, by the aid of a good ear, natural quickness, and a dashing boldness, which carried all before it, in a few days he actually played so as to give us all pleasure. True, the guitar was every now and then sent flying from one end of the room to the other in a fit of impatience, but it stood its hard treatment wonderfully, and Breck declared it sounded all the better for it.

But this guitar-playing by no means sufficed for cousin Breck's amusement. He also taught us all to waltz! There was a great talk about the "Navy Yard step," which we were assured was the best and easiest in the world.

Oh, those waltzing lessons were droll things! What fun poor Breck managed to extract from them; and how prettily Su, who had a natural turn for flirting, coquetted about them—and how shrewd I thought myself when I discovered, and confided to Bertha the great secret, that "Cousin Breck liked to waltz with Su twice as well as with either of us, and gave her twice as long lessons."

I remember one evening in especial, when Breck came home, quite out of spirits apparently, and throwing himself on a sofa, he declared he was tired to death, having been out two days and a night in search of a deserter.

How dreadful it sounded! cousin Breck chasing a deserter! We entreated to know what would be the fate of the poor fellow when he should be found. But on this point Breck was very mysterious. He merely drew a pistol from his breast, and laid it on the table, and unbuttoning his coat pointed to the hilt of the dagger concealed in its lining. The orders were to take the man "dead or alive," he said. We shuddered, and Su attempted to snatch the dagger from him.

Breck's excessive fatigue was gone in a moment, and we were all of us soon engaged in a wild romp; we, striving to get the dagger away from him; he pretending to defend himself with it. In the scuffle Su's hand received a slight scratch—and what a fuss was made about it. How sorry cousin Breck was, he would suffer no one but himself to bind up the wound—insisted on kissing the place to make it well, and pro-

mised Su a serenade by the Navy Yard band to console her.

The promised serenade was given soon after; and a proud and happy girl was Su to be able to say at school—"I had a serenade last night, by the Navy Yard band, given me by my cousin Breck of the United States Navy."

That cousin Breck was recklessly extravagant we gathered from an occasional ejaculation of my uncle on receiving his bills.

"Twelve pairs of boots in a month! the boy's crazy."

A rumor reached us too of the magnificent manner in which he was in the habit of tossing to his "boy" the coats or pants just come from the tailors, when they did not exactly suit his fastidious taste; but about these matters we troubled ourselves very little.

It was a sad day for us, and all the household, when cousin Breck was ordered to sea. The life seemed gone from the house after his departure. As for Su, though she denies it now, I am sure she wore the willow for his sake for a time, and carried about her person a miniature or locket. I recollect too that she was sadly plagued, about this time, with a short lock on her forehead, whence a ringlet had evidently been cut.

But Su remembers nothing of this now, though I have tried many a time to refresh her memory.

The return home after three years' cruise, when cousin Breck could talk of having actually "seen service," was delightful too; how warmly we all welcomed our sun-browned sailor! But things, nevertheless, were changed—Su was engaged to be married, and the first virgin pride of the young midshipman in his new dignity, and new accoutrements, had worn off. For us, too, the mysterious charm had departed from the United States Navy buttons and the little gilt anchors. Perhaps also, worst change of all, a little youthful buoyancy had fled from all our hearts.

Poor cousin Breck! tears as well as smiles are called up at your remembrance.

Surely your gay and careless heart (and none kinder ever beat) was meant only for fortune's smiles—not her frowns. And yet the stern future brought you a sad fate. Alas, for temptations unresisted—ruined hopes, gathering cares and early death.

## DORIA'S AFFAIRS.

### A SEQUEL TO "DR. WETHERGREEN'S PRACTICE."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SUSY L——'S DIARY."

#### CHAPTER I.

LITTLE Mary Walton was so very little, that, when she stood with Ambrose at Dr. Wethergreen and Caddy's wedding, her orange flowers were just up to his wide shoulder; and he was by no means one of the tallest of men. It was seen all about that her head was even with his shoulder; and looks and observations touching the matter were passed from one to another, along the pews. And people smiled, as much as to say, "We shall see! *that's* what we shall!" Because her head was as high as his shoulder, that was all. Only he did have the feeling—which, perhaps, was magnetically felt; perhaps seen in the form stooping a little toward her—that he must, in a way, shield her, and see to her, after that, the rest of his days, "that she was not at all over-run and poked about and stared out of countenance." It made him think of it, he said, next morning at breakfast, seeing what a bit of a thing she was down there at his elbow, and how broad and high he was above her. Birdy was so jocund over it, over the laughter and the light click of so many dishes at table, that the laughter, in the end, was turned altogether upon her. And Ambrose put his head down to look into Nan's face, (the gravest face at the table, by the way,) and said, "Ain't she a rascal, little Nan?"

Little Nan modestly hinted that she couldn't be called a rascal, very well, because she *wasn't* a male bird; and then birdy and all the rest made merry over that; somewhat to little Nan's discomfiture; until her brother reassured her by telling her, with his grave, sincere expression, that she was right; that, for his part, after that time, he should call her "Little Bunch." Birdy's feathers, on some sudden whim of hers, were all set out on end, at the moment, which probably suggested the idea to Ambrose.

Meanwhile, two squares or so out east, on the same street; sat three at breakfast, in a house large enough for twenty people. And to make out even three, they had just rang for Irish Mary to come up; thinking that, perhaps, with her merry face and her good appetite, they would be able to think of something else but this—that

they could have no more of Caddy there, to sit and eat with them, *just* as she always had done until that morning.

Irish Mary brought up the hot buckwheat cakes she had just been frying for her own breakfast, when she was called. She brought up, moreover, a very large amount of lively satisfaction in her heart, generated there by this new demonstration of the respect in which both her old and her young mistress held her—"as if they knew that I'd die for them as quick as any thing," she said to herself, with tears in her eyes, as she slipped off one apron and tied on another. It was perfectly natural, that, of this abundant, effervescing satisfaction, considerable portions should be reflected back, as they were, from Mary's shining face, and tossed from her merry tongue. When she found how sad their thoughts were inclined to be, running on their loss of Caddy, she shook her head gently, and told them that "they didn't know what *raison* they had to be thankful. They had great *raison*; for she'd been always a blessing to them; and now she'd be a blessing to another, to another home, close be their own, where they could see her iv'ry day and iv'ry hour, an' they choosed. Ah, it was indeed *raison* to be very thankful that they had. An' if they wasn't thankful, she'd go an' be married herself to Mac Garvin, (*he'd* been asking her) and then see 'f they would be thankful."

While they laughed at this, and at Mary's lively way of saying it, (for all she had tears in her eyes, thinking how she really did like him, the good, homely soul, all pitted up with small pox; but wouldn't leave Mrs. Phillips and Miss Doria for forty Mac Garvins) little Mary Walton came tripping in; for the Waltons lived close by. Their garden and Mrs. Phillips' joined.

She came in to eat breakfast with them, she said, dragging off bonnet and shawl, throwing them into a chair, and sending her friendly eyes one way and another.

There were joyful exclamations and kisses and thanks. Mrs. Phillips called her "a dear child!" and told her that *she* always knew just what one needed; at the same time that she drew Mary's

chair (which she herself had taken at once along with her to the table) close to her own.

Poor Irish Mary too was glad. "Miss Walton was a darl'n to come then! she'd bring dishes for the darl'n; she'd run down; and, in two minutes, she'd be up again with hot cakes for the darl'n! she would, indeed!" All on Mrs. Phillips and Miss Doria's account. She had lost her "sociable time;" but "that was nothin'," she said to herself, to put back the tears that kept coming to her eyes.

"No, indeed! that was nothing." And, by-the-by, that is something that our hard-working, cheerful-tempered Irish girls are often saying to themselves, to put the tears and the regrets back. And, the very next moment, we hear them humming in a nasal way, and clamping diligently in their heavy shoes, trying their best to let us see how willing and glad they are "to do for us."

This time the cheerful alacrity and abnegation were recompensed ten thousand fold, in Irish Mary's estimate, by their saying to her, when she came up with the steaming cakes, "That's a good Mary. Sit down now, and eat some of them, while they are hot and good;" and by her seeing, in the quick glance she threw round on them all, that they really did mean what they said; that they did really, out of their hearts, choose that she should come, delicate little Mary Walton and all, the darl'n!

Irish Mary was very happy, that morning; and for many and many a morning, thinking of it while she worked. She told Mac Garvin of it, the next time he came to ask her. She shook her head, saying, "No, Mac Garvin; not as larg as they need me, an' want me—my old mist-r-ress an' my young mist-r-ress. They're so good, so kind ter me, ye see!"

She was thankful then and afterward, however, that he said, in return, "I shall wait for ye, Ma-r-y. Ye will see that I shall; for I'm in no hurry, 'f I cannot have you. In no hurry."

"And so, Mary dear, you like him?" asked Doria, looking down into her empty cup, and moving her spoon about in it.

They still sat at table, although Irish Mary's hum and clomp had been going on a half hour down in the kitchen.

"Yes, I do. He's monstrous large; don't you think he is?"

"Pretty large."

"Yes; I was half afraid of him, some way, he seemed so monstrous large," she added, laughing. "He must have one of the best hearts in the world, I know," she continued, in a musing way, after a pause.

She had heard of his goodness to Dr. Wether-

green; had heard it from Caddy's grateful lips; and they had had tearful eyes, tearful tones in reciting and commenting; for, incidentally, they thought and spoke of it, how many there are in this world, how many there are in that one small city, who wait and grow faint and discouraged, as Dr. Wethergreen had done; and who have nowhere a good, rich cousin Ambrose, or any body, to come, and help, and encourage them.

## CHAPTER II.

"THE season," so called, was over at Lake Win-nipiseogee, but the warmth and mellow beauty of a resplendent Indian summer-time lingered, day after day upon the scene. So the birds sang on the islands and on the shores, as if it were a new spring, sang and chatted, now that they had nothing else to do, and flitted, all day long, day after day. Jo Hendrick, a still artist, with dreamy, beautiful eyes and mouth, lingered; and was out all day long, going lazily from point to point in his tiny boat. So the odd, rich old bachelor, Marsh, of Boston, lingered. Or, in fact he had not been there long. He meant not to come until the flow of visitors was quite over. He wasn't going up there to hear young girls giggle, and see young coxcombs dangling. No! and he ground the muttered negative between his teeth. He was going up to see the autumn winds swing and toss the pines, and to hear them go soughing through the nights.

That bright Indian summer was bad for him. He hated it on the whole; or hated that so many people should come threading out of every boat, to enjoy it there where he was. Because, of all the people who met him there, or elsewhere, there were so few to like him, to understand how he wanted friends more, ten thousand times, than he wanted God, heaven, or anything; and yet, with his unlucky manners, could never get them. So he was only seen at meal-times coming in, eating a few hasty mouthfuls, and going out, always with the same frown about his brows, always with the same darkness on his bent features; and, late in the evening, he was seen moving slowly this way and that, in the bright moonlight.

Well, he was there, staying for the time to come, when only himself and the flying winds and clouds would be left, Hendrick was there enjoying himself; and, as has already been intimated, the "Lady of the Lake" never came across that she did not bring numbers great or small; most of whom had seen the lake in the legitimate summer-time, but who wanted to see how things looked then, when the skies, mountains and trees

had their royal garments on; and when they themselves, now that there was no more summer heat, were so strong, so ready for vivid enjoyment.

One day, early in the Indian summer, a tall, broad, richly (albeit, somewhat grotesquely) attired man, young and with the sunniest face in the world, said to a pretty little, fashionably dressed creature, who was taking timid steps over the plank at the landing, "Here, little Mary Walton! let me lead you." He took one of her baby-like hands into both of his, held it very close, bending a little toward her to say, "You're as timid as a hare, I see. So I shall see to taking care of you."

She did not speak, or look up. He felt, however, that her hand lay within his, as if there was its place, and that her step became instantly assured and free. He felt that she liked to be helped by him, even as he liked to help her; and this made her very dear to him.

He turned back to see to the rest. Caddy looked as delicate and as tranquil as a babe; and as lovely, in her light travelling dress. But she too needed help over the landing; and her fine-looking husband gave it tenderly, as if she were cherished "like the apple of his eye."

"As for our best Doria, she never needs help, or anything," said Ambrose, speaking heartily, and heartily going to her to assist her. But she was crossing with firm steps, with unconcerned looks. He did not, therefore, offer her his hand, or his arm. He merely kept by her, answered her smile with another, and said, "Always sufficient for yourself, dear Doria; always making your own quiet way."

Again Doria answered with one of her pleasant smiles; she was swallowing her tears, though, all the while; and saying, within herself, "Yes; always making my own way; and this is what I shall be doing to the end."

Ambrose, out of his quick sympathies, felt that the heart had less part than the face and the feet, in her wonderful self-reliance. He said so to her, in a few words, as they were coming up with the rest.

"And, if it is so?" asked she, with her eyes on his face.

"Why, if it is so, I shall see to it. I shall take care of you from this time."

"I shan't let you. You shall take care of little Mary Walton. It will trouble me if I see you taking the least pains on my account." Her eyes grew very earnest as she spoke.

"Taking pains—taking pains, your old phrase. And I've told you ten times, as many as that, that I don't take pains; that neither the doctor,

nor I, nor any man fit to come near so good, so dear a creature as you are—as you are, in spite of this piece of folly of yours—would ever feel that he is 'taking pains,' when he sees to you a little. He would feel—at least, I would, the doctor would, I know, and I have no doubt others would do the same—that, in doing you, perhaps, some small service, he was doing himself a great one. He would feel obliged to you for being a little more—why a little more willing to be seen to, a little."

They had come up with the rest; and, for the nonce, all had a part in contending with impracticable Doria; in trying to make her believe—as *they* most assuredly did—that she was the best creature anywhere about, and that it was her duty to let them, and all who offered and were worthy, to do something for her now and then.

"When I ask you! I will ask whenever I want help, or anything!" she said, laughingly, but with increasing color in her cheeks, from first to last, inclusive.

So that Ambrose and Dr. Joseph were half vexed. So that, in making a little ascent, they would both help her; would both leave Caddy to help Mary; and Mary, Caddy.

Doria cried about it after she got into her chamber; her solitary chamber now, for the first time since she was a child. She had shown herself very obstinate, she knew. She supposed they had all begun to think, and would think it more and more, that she was already, two years almost beforehand, an odd thing; an odd old maid. Perhaps they would come, in time, to lay it up against her; for she must go on seeing to herself. She had determined anew on the point before she came to the lake; that Dr. Joseph should be for his wife, Caddy, and Ambrose for his pretty little favorite, Mary; that both Dr. Joseph and Ambrose should see that she was abundantly sufficient unto herself. That dear, affectionate Caddy and Mary should see it too. And then they would go their ways and she hers, in a perfect freedom. She sighed many times, and many times had tears in her eyes, as she planned it. She moreover wished, that, here in our New England, as in Old England, and in all refined and enlightened Europe, lovers and pairs in the honeymoon, had their loves and comforts more in common with fathers and mothers, uncles and aunts, old maid sisters and old bachelor brothers, and with the little troops of nephews and nieces. She liked the New England fidelity of lover to lover, of the newly-made wife to husband, and of the newly-made husband to wife; but she wondered whether this were not possible; and compatible, at the same time, with

a less intense exclusiveness—especially in the lovers.

### CHAPTER III.

"HALLO—hallo!" cried Ambrose, extending a hand to a gentleman who sprang up from the table to meet him.

Dr. Wethergreen knew him slightly it seemed. He shook hands with him and said, "How do you do, Mr. Brooks? glad to see you here."

"Where's Mrs. Brooks? Hasn't she been here?" asked Ambrose, seating Mary and Doria; seating Doria first.

"Yes; she has been here. She left this morning. She has gone to Dover to her family, for a week or so."

"She's coming back? Here, waiter! just shift the captain's dishes over here into our neighborhood; hey, Captain Brooks? wouldn't you like it? I want you here, you see, to help me take care of these girls. Miss Phillips, Captain Brooks—sister to Dr. Wethergreen's wife there"—Captain Brooks bowed to Caddy—"Miss Walton, Captain Brooks."

Yes; Captain Brooks made gallant, easy bows and compliments to them all. The waiter, as it happened, placed his dishes opposite Doria; Ambrose, therefore, seated himself, saying, "All right! all right!" opposite blushing little Mary Walton.

"Mrs. Brooks is coming back?" Ambrose again asked, in the midst of serving Mary; in the midst of smiling at the bashfulness on her part, that was so engaging to him.

"Yes; in the course of a week. Miss Phillips let me——"

Yes; Miss Phillips, otherwise our obstinate Doria, would let him do anything for her. For the Mrs. Brooks who left that morning, who would return, in the course of a week, was a good spirit, as it were, utterly exorcising "Doria's folly"—as they had all learned of Ambrose to call it—making it clear and pleasant as a summer morning between her and the fine-looking man across the table. She talked with him—she hadn't been at the table five minutes, before she found that he was one of those men with whom one talks, without premeditation, on and on; to whom one has more and more to say, the more one has said already. There was a good deal that was grave and solid in the expression of his face, in the tones of his voice, and in his general bearing. But he was very cheerful. His smile came very readily; and was very—why, very open, very—but then, no matter. Doria said so to herself when she began

an inward comment. We say so to ourselves and to our readers; for, did not Mrs. Brooks leave that morning? and would she not be back there, in the course of a week?

"Yes," Doria said to herself. "And I am so thankful there is a Mrs. Brooks somewhere to come back! When she comes back, she shall love me, and I will love her. I will sit with her and walk with her; and then the others" (she meant Dr. Joseph and Caddy, Ambrose and little Mary Walton) "can go in pairs as they please."

This was more and more in her thoughts, as the second and third and fourth days passed; as, each day, Captain Brooks attended to her with more and more care and delicacy; and evinced more and more a liking for talking with her upon the great political questions that concerned the nations, by the way, they talked; upon philosophy and the arts; as well as upon the commonest subjects; getting vivid interest out of them all. They would still talk about these things after Mrs. Brooks came, Doria promised herself; and with added interest, no doubt; for Mrs. Brooks must be an intelligent, noble creature to be the chosen of such a man; and, especially, after having been four years his bosom companion. She knew that she had been his companion four years; for, the day her party came, she heard him say to one who spoke of a certain date, "It was four years ago, sir. I remember it; for it happened the day I was married."

An expression as if of subdued sorrow, or at least of regret, stole upon his features as he spoke, taking the place of the open smile, the cheerfulness that ordinarily was, as it were, a light round about him. Doria saw it. And then, and when she thought of it afterward, she knew that it came out of his love for the wife who was away, out of his want of her; and her respect for him, her liking for him was augmented a hundred fold, thinking of it. She wished, however, more and more, that she could know what kind of an eye Mrs. Brooks had—whether genial and full of light and warmth like her husband's, or close and hard like poor Mr. Marsh's—what kind of a manner, what kind of a heart; whether frank and inviting, or cold and repulsive like an iceberg. Hu—she shuddered, on the whole, thinking of the possible repulsive woman on one side of her, and of a possible iceberg on the other, close; hemming her close in an iceberg's veritable shape, perhaps; perhaps having no form whatever, but an essence of loneliness and apathy.

"Doria! Doria! darling Doria," half said and half sang two merry voices, before they were

fairly within her chamber. "We've come after you! We want to sail, you see; it is so beautiful out."

"Yes, my dear ones, I will come."

"Aren't you well, Doria, *best* Doria?" Little Mary Walton had both arms about her waist, and was looking eagerly in her face.

"Perfectly, darling."

"But somehow your voice has a sound, a something new in it, that makes me reproach myself for being so—so happy. For I am oh, so happy, Doria!" clinging closer to her. "It is so beautiful here!" She still held Doria; but with loosened embrace, and her beautiful eyes were turned through a window to the lake and the glowing woods. Doria kissed her, and, out of a full heart, called her "A dear little girl."

"And Caddy is a dear Caddy!" she added, drawing her sister close to her, close to the window where they could see the little white sails, on one part of the lake, and on another, in the bright light and in the deep shade. They stood there looking out, talking about how beautiful the earth is, and how worthy the human heart should be, until they heard a tap on the door, and Dr. Joseph saying, "Are you ready, girls?"

"We are waiting," he added, when the door was opened to him. He smiled and reached out his hand for Caddy.

Caddy and Mary both sprang forward; Mary knew that, when she came below, a smile would be ready for her too, and a hand reached out. Doria stood still, with a hand on the door-knob, and asked, "Who are 'we,' brother Joseph? who will go with us?"

"Who *should* 'we' be, sister Doria, but Caddy and I," again smiling on Caddy, "cousin Ambrose and little Mary here, your good self and Captain Brooks?"

"Yes; well," drawing back a little, "I think I won't go. I want to look the papers over. See! they lie there, a whole pile of them, that I have hardly touched."

"You shan't!" Caddy and Mary both said, with their arms and their hands hold of her, bringing her. They both had tears in their eyes too, stirred by this something new, that Mary spoke of in Doria's voice.

Dr. Joseph did not say anything; but he looked with steady, very friendly eyes into her face, took her hand, drew it through his arm and led her down on one side, and his wife—congratulating herself, congratulating them all that they had got Doria—on the other. Doria did not congratulate herself at all, it seemed. She spoke often; was kind toward them all; but her eyes,

when they rested on one, in speaking, had the same "something new," something very grave and quiet in them, that was in her tones; so that the best side of the path was given to her on the way to the boat; and the best seat in the boat; and Caddy wrapped her own shawl around her with very slow moving, affectionate hands.

#### CHAPTER IV.

THEY came back toward the shore in the sober twilight. Ambrose was helping Mary forward in the boat, and Captain Brooks Doria, when Ambrose said, looking back to Doria, "What will you do, Doria, when Mrs. Brooks comes? She'll be here now in a day or two. I'm thinking you'll miss his right hand not a little when she comes."

Mary tapped his arm nervously with her finger the instant he began to speak. But he went on; and Mary, then and afterward, kept on wondering what made him, who was always so considerate, so quick to perceive what it was best to do, say that; *just* that, and at just that time, when poor, dear Doria already had that something new, and, as she felt, regretful in her thoughts.

Doria bore it well enough, however. She kept her quiet manner, her quiet smile, (the color came a little though.) She brought her other hand up, laid it an instant on his arm, as she said, "I shall be glad when she comes. For I can still have *this* arm, can't I, Captain Brooks? And she can have the other. There is plenty of room for us both, isn't there?"

Captain Brooks had the slightest look in the world of feeling puzzled by the question; of doubting with himself whether, indeed, there would be any room left for Doria, after Mrs. Brooks returned. He hesitated in replying—"Plenty of room there must be for Miss Phillips—if——"

"Yes," quickly interposed Doria. "And then there is your left arm, Ambrose," bowing slightly to him and smiling, "and brother Joseph's left arm. So that, on the whole, nobody has so many arms, and such good arms at their service as I. And if it were otherwise," she added, thoughtfully, after a pause, "if there was not one arm at my service, I could make my own way, as so many others do."

She tried to smile in saying this; tried to control her voice perfectly; but it is doubtful whether she succeeded; for they were all very still as they moved forward; and Doria was sure that she heard her companion sigh; that she felt his arm tightening its pressure slightly upon her own. This caused her to instantly rally herself,

and proceeded, forthwith to rally the rest, with a project that instant conceived, she told them, of asking poor, cross Mr. Marsh if he would walk with them, and let her have *his* right arm in emergencies."

"He'll snarl at you," said little Mary Walton. "He did yesterday to that funny Mrs. Dow. Ha! She told as she was going where he stood with his elbow on Shakspeare's head, pulling a yellow leaf to pieces, to make herself agreeable to him. So she went with all the courage she could muster; but she was as afraid of him," laughing, "as she would have been of a polar bear; and she went edging along, and with such a curious look in her face! When she got up to him, she didn't know, for the life of her, what to say; and so she asked him whether he liked children! What do you suppose," she added, with some pretty wonder in her eyes, "made her say that? to him?"

They all laughed.

"Well, he just growled at her; and she came away, looking as if she were altogether conscious of having failed to make herself agreeable. He'll do the same by you, Doria, if you go near him to speak to him. I hope we all 'may be there to see,' don't you, Mr. Ambrose?" looking with a bashful air away up to his eyes.

Yes. But then, little Mary, Mr. Ambrose didn't believe in Mr. Marsh's being a polar bear; although he had no doubt he might be brought into a semblance of one, or of almost any other sort of creature, according to one's estimate of him, and to the character of one's approach. For his life was clearly an impersonal kind of life. His soul might be as fair as a babe's, and supplied with untold resources of thrift and power, and of a divine way of living; but overlooking these home advantages, he would go everywhere else but to his own soul, and grope and stumble, strain his eyes and stretch his hands—for power; for something, for anything that would set him at ease on all sides. So he was constantly disappointed and annoyed. People never understood him; never made use of delicacy and kindness in approaching him, as in approaching another. He was an ill-used man; an angry man very often, and a lonely man at all times; for, if he had not friends and friendly appreciation, he had nothing.

Both Doria and Ambrose understood that this was his character and feeling. The rest demurred, save Captain Brooks, who walked with his eyes on the ground, and seemed not to attend to what they were saying.

"I am sure we are right, Doria, and they are wrong, this little thing down here," (meaning

Mary Walton) "and all. We'll convince them, won't we? we'll take him in hand."

Fond as ever good Ambrose was of taking things into his hands. Only there was this agreeable change in him—while the old muscular force was a good deal diminished, in part by the ardors of his last "campaign" at gold-seeking, in part through the induction of his new habits of leisure and social recreation, the old nervous force was a good deal augmented; so that now his hands easily let go the mattoe and the spade and the speculative strife in mammon, at the same time that his mind went eagerly forth, back and forth, amongst books and men. He was already hold of a little company of terms of science, of art, of philosophy, terms feebly understood, yet always on our tongues, as if their exact force and meaning were clear to us, like the *a b c's*. He was tumbling the books over, great and small, and tumbling his own conceptions over to make out definitely what art is, and what science is; definitely what art and science do, what their mission is; and how, by what laws and methods they fill it. He asked Doria one morning, (it was the next morning after the sail) with Webster's dictionary in his hands, what idea she had of art; what she conceived art to be; what relationship she saw between art and science.

Yes, indeed! Doria could tell him. Why art—why art was—oh, indeed, she did not know *what* art was. She only knew that, to her, art was a very tall, very beautiful female, with loose, trailing drapery, with loose looks, Grecian head and a laurel wreath. Science too was tall, with firmer contour than art, with a Minerva-sort of helmet on her head, and a rule and square in her hand; in one hand; the other lay on a pedestal.

Little Mary Walton was delighted. Those were precisely her ideas of art and science. Captain Brooks, Dr. Joseph and Caddy were a little apart sitting with the Dows and others; sometimes talking with them, sometimes attending to what Ambrose and Doria were saying. Capt. Brooks, although he did not turn his head that way at all, seemed as if he were altogether listening to what they said; for they in his immediate neighborhood must often speak to him the second time, before they could get his attention to what they were saying.

"Poor, cross Mr. Marsh," as Doria always called him, stood apart from all others, with his elbow on a corner of the mantel-piece, mechanically opening and shutting his tooth-pick, listening to Ambrose when he spoke, and to Doria when she spoke; looking at them steadily, that he might hear them above the snapping of the

cheerful fire, above the hum of all other voices. For it was a frosty morning, and all in the house were congregated in the parlor where the open fire blazed and crackled.

Doria looked up to Mr. Marsh once, when she was trying to make out what art was, he instantly withdrew his eyes and resumed the opening and shutting of his tooth-pick. She looked up again—instinctively; for she felt that he listened to them with interest that he strove to conceal—looked up, with a steady, clear expression, and this time he did not turn his eyes; this time he still listened. And as he listened, with his eyes on Doria's, his brow opened a little, and it seemed to Doria that light came into his features. Pretty soon, when they were all laughing at Doria's art in such long skirts, and Doria's science with the ugly helmet on her stiff head, he laughed too, almost as heartily as any one. Ambrose beckoned him over with his finger, and he came; carrying himself rather stiffly at first; but soon, as he talked with them, he was thoroughly at ease and animated; for he knew more than they all; not only of art and of science, but of whatever abstract term. Ambrose dragged in to be looked over and sifted.

But "poor Mr. Marsh!" said Doria, still, when she looked upon his new complacency. For she reflected that, unlike the steadfastness of that which is purely, or chiefly self-desired, as his came with the word, the glance of another, so with a counter word and glance, it would all vanish and leave it oh, so dark, so dead, within his brain and within his heart! She felt that what he needed was a consciousness of God, a hope and frequent thought of the bright land, heaven, where his inward struggle and pain would be over, and his idol-love and service. She felt that she too needed it; for she too forgot God and heaven so often, and bowed down to the earth and the earth-born! Like the Magdalen (as one sees the best Magdalens in the arts) she

bowed herself, disciplining her heart and begging for heavenly strength, heavenly purity; so that God might be in her heart, finding it a fit temple.

Mr. Marsh and Ambrose still talked of their "personalities" and their "impersonalities," their "subjectives" and their "objectives," little Mary Walton sitting close by to turn over the dictionary for them. Dr. Joseph, Caddy, the Dows and Captain Brooks, still—or all but Capt. Brooks—talked and listened and looked into the fire by turns. Captain Brooks was standing by a table, just back of Doria and her great arm-chair. He was turning over the books, it seemed, but with no very strong indications of interest. When Doria turned her head at the sound of the rustling leaves, he came a little nearer, saying something about it, that the sun was warm that day; that by noon it would be finer and warmer on the lake than they found it yesterday. And then would she like to go out?

She thought she would not go out that day, she replied, turning slightly toward him, but without raising her eyes. She had letters to write when it was warm enough in her chamber. She presumed it was warm enough then. She would go then. And she gathered up handkerchief, shawl and newspaper to go.

He was at the door to open it for her. At the door she met his glance, when she would acknowledge his courtesy; and there was something in it that she had never before seen—or felt; for it was rather a feeling than a sight—in any other glance, something that ran through her being, for an instant, like the thrilling breath of the early spring, rendering her very calm and strong, very happy.

"Don't write letters all day," said he, his eyes following her to the foot of the stairs.

She smiled, bowed her parting, and was over the stairs out of his sight.

(TO BE CONCLUDED.)



## THE TURNING POINT.

BY MISS ALICE GRAY.

Lucy Holmes was one of the most light-hearted, frolicsome beings that ever shook ringlets. Thoughtless! yes, thoughtless as the sunbeam on the floor. Often would old farmer Holmes smilingly smooth back her hair, and call her his mad-cap girl; and then sigh as he wondered whether time and care would gently bend down that light spirit, or break it at once. Lucy had no mother, and Aunt Tabitha used to say that she had her hands full with her. Aunt Tabitha was very prominent in the church—one of those people who always draw their mouths down and their eyebrows up, and assume a lugubrious tone when they talk about religion. "I never can get Lucy to think of anything serious!" was her perpetual complaint to Deacon Fowler's wife, their next neighbor. "I think that at seventeen, it is about time she should see the vanity of this world, and be converted."

"Oh, well! young people will be a little gay."

"Lucy is more than a *little* gay. I wish I could get her to sit under the new minister in the South Church. He is getting up a revival, and has anxious meetings every evening. Sister Wickfield told me she had a delightful season there the other night."

Aunt Tabitha thought a great deal of dignified behavior, and Lucy often awakened her righteous indignation on that point. She would dance about the house, and often, with sun-bonnet in hand, bound into the very room where her aunt sat in grave converse with the "revival preacher," or some of the "sisters." The sanctimonious air and whine of some of these "sisters" Lucy would often mimic. Mr. Holmes would shake his head, saying, "My daughter! your aunt means well. It is unfortunate she deals so much in these cant phrases. They are ridiculous to you, and very offensive to me. It is sometimes a fault among religious people. They lay open to ridicule the religion really dear to them. They debase it in the eyes of the world, for very few take the pains to separate the gold from the dross; and they make their conversation very unwelcome, to say the least, to many good people whose taste and refinement turn from everything of the kind. As for me, I am a plain man, and don't pretend to much taste, but I don't like such things. Let not your good be evil spoken of."

Lucy always listened to her father's words with a glimpse of the beauty in simple religion standing by itself, refining and ennobling; but she lost it again when she viewed the robe in which Mrs. Tabitha enveloped hers; and she wondered whether it was only a robe, and not a necessary adjunct.

Lucy was fond of gay colors, and feathers and flowers, and aunt Tabitha cast up her eyes at the sight of them as part of the vanities of this life. Lucy's perfectly formed frame and bounding spirits impelled her to the natural exercise of dancing, and aunt Tabitha held it was a crying sin in a church member to allow his daughter to conform so much to this world. But Lucy danced on, and sung on, as much a child as she was at twelve years of age.

In the outskirts of the village at Greendale stood a dilapidated cottage—hut, rather. The reckless, dogged look of the man who sat smoking his pipe in the doorway, and the lazy, dirty children who lay about, told the character of the inhabitants. The good people of Greendale had a Missionary Society, and a society for the relief of the poor; but the poor must be "worthy, deserving objects," not ragged, idle outcasts, and all their missionary sympathies were engaged for "fields" on the other side of the world, (Barriboola Gha, perhaps,) overlooking the real missionary ground at their very doors. They thought more of educating little East Indians, who, even when elevated, would still be an inferior race, than of enlightening those in whose veins run the proud Saxon blood, formed for action and rule, now swaying the destinies of the world. Did I say all their sympathies were engaged? Stop! there were some visionaries among them, who cried out in horror at the ignorance and moral degradation of the New Zealanders, and never took the trouble to inform themselves that there were those in their own village, in the heart of their own New England, who could hardly answer the question, who made you?

Why! no one ever went to Sam Tucker's cottage. Two ladies had tried it once, but half frightened by Sam's dark looks, they never came a second time. Joe Tucker, the eldest son, had grown up to be nineteen or twenty—ignorant and degraded, but not wicked as might be expected.

One day all Greendale was startled by the intelligence that a murder had been committed. Mr. Read, one of the largest farmers, had been knocked down in his own fields, by a blow from a rake-handle in the hands of Joe Tucker. The young man had been hired as a day laborer during harvest. Some altercation had occurred, and in a moment of passion he had given the fatal blow. He had escaped, but the constables were out after him in every direction. Before the day was over, hand-bills had been spread through the neighboring villages and towns, and information sent to the Boston and New York police.

Joe would soon be taken—there seemed no doubt of that, yet day after day passed, and he still eluded the search. One afternoon, about a fortnight after the occurrence, Lucy Holmes was returning from a ramble in the woods, when she was terribly frightened by the sudden appearance of Joe Tucker in her path.

"Don't scream, Miss, don't scream! Ye needn't be afeared," said Joe, who looked ghastly and emaciated. "Only listen to me. I wouldn't harm a hair of your head. Can't you give me a morsel to eat, I'm starving to death?"

"I wish I had something for you, but I haven't," faltered Lucy.

"Then I must give myself up," he groaned. "I've lived on roots and berries for the last week. And they'll hang me for getting angry. God knows I never meant to kill the man. Yes, they'll hang me, for such as I am have no friends."

"Don't, oh! don't talk so," said Lucy, the warm tears filling her eyes as she looked at the wretched outcast. "You have one friend at least. Indeed I would do anything for you that I could."

Joe looked up in surprise. It was the first word of kindness from a stranger that in the whole course of his life had ever fallen on his ear. He knew not what to make of it.

"You a friend to me," he said. "You forget who I am."

"No, I do not. At this moment, I would give almost all I possess to have the power to do something for you."

The accent and look were not to be mistaken. The wild, rude heart on which they fell was thoroughly subdued. Joe moved a few steps off, and leaned his face against a tree.

"Bless you! bless you for those words," he said, in a broken voice. "If I could have heard such as them before, perhaps—but that's over now. All's over now."

"No! no! I am sure you are sorry for what you have done, and——"

"And what? What is before me even if I should get out of their clutch? And I'll find it hard to do that. The officers are all over, I suppose?"

"Yes!" and Lucy shuddered and looked around.

"So Bill told me a week ago. He brought me something to eat, and they tracked him to my hiding-place. I had a desperate dodge that time. That's a week ago, and I haven't been able to let him know where I am, or get a crust of bread since."

"Will you trust me?" said Lucy.

"Ay!" returned Joe Tucker, after a long look on the pale girl.

"Then come with me. You wouldn't be able to stay here longer at any rate, for I heard father say they were to have a thorough scouring of all the wood to-morrow morning."

She turned, and hastily traversing the lonesome wood-path in which they had been standing, came to some pasture land owned by her father. Springing over the stone wall, she led her companion by a short cut across the fields and through the orchards. The shadows of twilight were thick around when they reached a low, disused out-building. She opened the door.

"Here you are safe for the present," she said, hurriedly. "No search will be made here. As soon as I possibly can I will bring you food."

As she turned to go, Joe laid his hand upon her arm. "You will not betray me?" said he, with gleaming eye.

"You wrong me, indeed you do. I would sooner die," said the excited girl.

Joe withdrew his grasp, and she reached her own room she hardly knew how, and sat down to think over what she had done. This was the wild, thoughtless, petted girl! Her woman's heart, true as the needle to the pole, had sprung up at the call for kindness.

"Now, Lucy," commenced aunt Tabitha, when she appeared in the sitting-room, "this is what I call scandalous. I know how late you got home. I saw you run up stairs. Where have you been?"

"Out taking a walk."

"Taking a walk, indeed! You'd have been much better employed at home doing something useful. But if anything is of use, that's enough for you—you don't like it. I suppose you'll be too tired to go to prayer-meeting with me this evening. You always have some excuse."

"Yes, I can't go," said Lucy.

"Oh! what are you coming to? Do you ever think of the state you are in, Lucy?"

She did not answer, and her aunt departed for "meeting" with an expression of pious horror.

Mr. Holmes kept good country hours, and every one in his house was supposed to be in bed at ten o'clock. Lucy glided down to the buttery, and filled a basket as large as she could carry with the best there was. Then she paused, while a nervous trembling stole over her. What was she about to do? Go forth alone, at night, to put herself in the power of a murderer. How much she would have given to run away to her own room, and bury her face in her pillow, and shut out all responsibility—all necessity for action. But not so—the pallid and hunger-worn must not die, felon though he be. And he had trusted her. She took up the basket and unbolted the kitchen door, when the watch-dog began to bark.

"Hush! Bruno, hush! be quiet!" she said, as the animal came toward her.

Recognizing the familiar voice, he submitted to be caressed, but would not leave her. She knew not what to do. His barking might already have awakened somebody—she started at every sound. She harshly ordered the dog away, but his low growl at this alarmed her far more. He evidently scented the meat in her basket, and kept continually jumping upon it. Almost in despair, she went round to the other side of the house, and pulling out a large piece of meat, threw it to him, and he immediately plunged his teeth into it. Then she sped away breathlessly.

The night was dark and damp. Her feet were soon wet, and her slight form chilled through, but it was another feeling that was shaking in every limb. Other fears than those of discovery, or the nameless ones of the night made her breath come short. All was dark in Joe's hiding-place, and her trembling fingers could not move fast enough in pushing back the slide of the dark lantern she carried. With the first ray of light, she caught the gleam of a pair of fierce eyes in the farthest corner. She shuddered and drew back.

"Don't be afear'd, Miss," said Joe, coming forward.

Like a famished wolf he seized on the food. Not a word was spoken for many minutes, but bread and meat and pies and pickles were fast disappearing. At last Joe looked up. To Lucy the sight of the avidity with which he eat had been far greater reward than any thanks, but tumultuous, broken words rushed in deep sincerity to his lips, as he looked on the slight young figure before him. Lucy was half frightened at the strength and vehemence of his expressions, but he again entreated her to have no fears of him.

"You have saved my life," he said, "and can

you think I'd harm you? You're not more safe in your own father's parlor than here, murderer though I am."

"Mr. Read is dead, I suppose," said he, after a pause.

"No, he is living yet, though there is no hope of his recovery."

"I'm glad he isn't dead," said Joe, drawing a long breath. "There isn't blood upon my head yet."

"How are you to get away?" asked Lucy.

"I can't tell."

There was a long silence. "I don't see any way," said Lucy, "but don't be discouraged. I'll do all I can. Something may happen. You can stay here in safety. You have food enough there for to-morrow, haven't you? I'll come again to-morrow night."

"God bless you, Miss," was the half choked response, and that night the hunted felon slept soundly on the premises of the sheriff for the county.

"They're off to look after that wretch, Joe Tucker," said aunt Tabitha, coming into Lucy's room the next morning.

At dinner, Mr. Holmes' first words were, "We may give it up now. Joe Tucker was about here a week ago, but he's off now, I'm persuaded. He'll not run far though. They've got some of the knowing ones on the watch, and they'll ferret him out, no matter where he is. Why, Lucy, what on earth is the matter with you? What makes you flush so?"

Lucy was taking her first lesson in the art which every woman must learn—command of countenance. She stammered out some excuse, and left the dining-room as soon as she could. After dinner the consciousness of her secret made her fancy suspicion in her father's every look, and when night came how softly she crept down stairs!

She provided herself with a piece of meat for Bruno, and then opened the kitchen door and softly called him. Leaving him deeply engaged, she took her way to the old corn-house. Joe received her with a kind of affectionate reverence, as if she were a being of another sphere. He had made himself a den in the loft, so concealed that one might search long without finding it. Lucy had brought him some books and papers, but she found he was but an indifferent reader. She could devise no plan of escape, and they both thought it best to wait awhile.

She had spent the morning in thought, an occupation very new to her. Joe Tucker's life seemed to depend on her, and if the burden of a fellow-creature's fate would weigh heavily on

any one, how much more on the joyous little heart that had never known a care. How should she manage his escape? She thought for a moment of trusting to her father's kind heart and warm, generous feelings. In her child-like ingenuousness she longed to do so. It seemed as terrible to have to decide anything of such importance for herself and by herself. But no! she remembered his strict sense of justice, and stern, unbending integrity.

Aunt Tabitha appeared at the breakfast-table the next morning with her cap-strings flying, and her brows drawn together.

"Some one must have been in the buttery these last two nights," she commenced. "There's heaps of things gone. There's a nice leg of lamb, hardly touched at dinner, and two large pieces of pork—they're gone. And those apple-pies I made the other day, two of them were gone yesterday morning, and now two more, and a whole pot of my best pickles, and a jar of sweetmeats, and I don't know how many loaves of bread and cake and rolls of butter. I'm thankful I know nothing about it."

Lucy played her part very well this time, and her father and aunt wondered in vain. Still the attacks on the larder did not cease, and aunt Tabitha suspected in turn each of the two "helps," and then every one of the workmen or the farm. One night Lucy had just descended to the buttery, when she turned round and saw her father just behind her.

"Why, Lucy," he said, "is it you who commits these depredations?"

Lucy forced herself to speak calmly. "Why, papa, could you think I ate all those cold shoulders of lamb and sirloins of beef aunt Tabitha laments so pathetically? I want some sugar to drop lavender on," and taking a few lumps, she proceeded up stairs before her father. He laughed. "A pretty fool I have been to jump out of my bed at this hour for such a minx as you. I thought I had the thief. I'll not do it again, at any rate."

The weeks went on. Poor Joe Tucker learned to love the very ground on which Lucy stood. Nothing so pretty, so sweet and delicate had ever come near him before. His untamed heart was naturally warm and affectionate, and now it was stirred to its inmost depths. The passionate devotion with which he worshipped his benefactress was a strange feeling to his wild, ignorant soul. It seemed to open a new world to him. Every visit showed Lucy more and more of the ardor of the poor fellow's attachment, and every visit saddened her more and more as she felt her own deficiencies. She had a consciousness, dim at

first, that this was the time to sow the seed of good in that untutored heart, and hers the hand to cast it—but she knew not how to do it. She thought how fluent aunt Tabitha would be in such a case, but that was not exactly the fluency she wished for.

For seven weeks Joe Tucker remained concealed in Mr. Holmes out-building. The excitement seemed to be lessened, and Lucy thought he might try to escape. She had just received her liberal quarterly allowance, and she gave him every cent of it. She disguised him with a complete suit of one of their working-men, and one night in October stood beside him for the last time. Poor Joe could not speak. He began several times "Miss Lucy"—and then choked up. His sobs spoke for him.

At last Lucy wiped away her streaming tears, and took his sun-burned hand in both hers. "Joe," she said, "promise me that when you get to California, you will try, to the best of your knowledge and ability, to be a man—an honest and good man."

"I do promise," said Joe, "I swear it by God in heaven."

Lucy placed a small Bible in his hand, and in five minutes he was gone.

The next morning she saw the doctor pass in a great hurry. Mr. Read was dying, they said. The brain fever, in which he had lain ever since the occurrence, seemed running to its close. Lucy thought of Joe and wept. The guilt of blood was really on his hand and conscience then. But at noon other tidings came. What had been thought the agony of death was but the lowest crisis of the fever, and now the surgeon thought he might recover.

He did recover, and on her father's bosom Lucy confessed all that she had done for Joe Tucker. That father sat astonished, and then his eyes filled, and he clasped his daughter to his swelling heart, wondering that in the thoughtless child should have been hidden such capabilities of feeling and action.

Aunt Tabitha might have preached to Lucy to the end of time, and produced no effect; but the impression of those midnight visits to the half ruined shed, where she had felt the want of inducements and hopes above this world, could not be effaced. It was made at a critical time in her life, just as childhood was taking its leave, and thus was she gently brought to the source of all help. She was as happy and as mirthful as ever—danced and sung just as much—went to none of her aunt Tabitha's favorite anxious meetings—even declined "sitting under" the "revival preacher"—but even aunt Tabitha

could not question the sincerity of her Christian character, for truly her "light so shone that men saw her good works, and glorified her Father in heaven."

News, good news came from California. Lucy received a letter from Joe. He had learned to write for the purpose of writing to her. He had obtained a situation as porter in a store, and was sober and industrious. "I keep my promise, Miss Lucy," he wrote. "I keep away from bad company, and try to learn something and be something—and its all for your sake."

And this was Lucy's own work. At the turning

point in Joe Tucker's life her kindness had met him, and fixed the direction of his future course. How different it would have been had she shrunk from the poor outcast, and he had been given up to the law. True, Mr. Read had lived, and he would have suffered nothing but a short imprisonment, but what would have been his prospects at his release?

Lucy heard from him every few months—there was no change in him—he continued a useful and worthy member of society. Was she not fully justified for having stopped the course of justice?

## A LEAF FROM A CARNATION.

BY AN ELDER SISTER.

Most flower lovers have their favorites among the multitude that enjoy the hospitality of the garden and conservatory. I am particularly fond of pinks, and my parterres and partiality include all kinds attainable to me, from the humble Deptford to the rich Carnation. In the division appropriated to the latter, one thrives under my care, whose story it may not be amiss to relate while inhaling its perfume, though it be somewhat deficient in sentimentality or romance, ingredients commonly abounding in flowery narrations the world over.

There is in our neighborhood a shattered old house which is not always occupied, when at all by some poor family whose scanty means do not permit them to obtain any better shelter. It stands in a bleak and lonely spot, and the rough piece of ground around is scarcely distinguished by any attempt at culture or care, from the roadside separated from it by a ruinous fence. Its tenants often change—too often indeed for them to take any interest, or even make themselves tolerably comfortable in their transient abode. Altogether, it is as unhome-like and repulsive-looking a place, through its natural disadvantages, its neglect and abuse, as could be found in a day's journey.

Two years ago, there moved into the house from an adjoining town, a family which was below the grade even of its usual occupants. The father was a miserable inebriate, and the avails of his fitful labor, eked out as they were, sometimes by private, sometimes by public charity, could scarcely fill the measure of the needs of his numerous family. Inconveniently numerous it was, for there were eight children, and burdensome it must have been, for all of them were under twelve years of age. How could it be expected that the wife and mother would be tidy, active, and energetic? There are few women whose mental and physical constitutions are hardy enough to sustain them at their own level amid burdens and trials like hers—a fast increasing family, with none to aid her in its care, the countless ills of poverty, and, worse than all, an intemperate husband.

Soon after the Griffins came into our vicinity, mention was made at a meeting of a sewing circle of the destitution of the family, particularly in

respect to clothing, and, as our gains were often appropriated to the relief of such needs, two of the members were deputed to call and inquire more particularly into their wants. I was one of these, and, with my friend, repaired to the house the next day. A dirty faced urchin opened the door at our summons, and after staring at us a minute without replying to our repeated inquiries for his mother, ran back into the house. Presently a woman came forward, wearily carrying an infant on her hip, and asked us to walk in. Neglected and uncleanly in person, with a languid, dispirited, nay, hopeless look, she prepared us by her appearance for that of things within doors—for the disorder, squalidness, rags, poverty and filth conspicuous everywhere. The only indication I saw of an idea of cleanliness on her part, was an ill-directed attempt, when we had seated ourselves, to sweep up the hearth with a worn-out hemlock broom, which merely resulted in driving out a cloud of smoke and ashes from the fire-place. The children seemed sickly and stupid; the mother broken down and disheartened. There was evidently need enough for all we might have to bestow, and after ascertaining that aid would be acceptable, and informing ourselves partly by observation, partly by inquiry, of their most pressing wants, we took leave.

We found frequent occasion to repeat our visit. At one time, a protracted fit of intoxication in the father would reduce them to absolute lack of food; at another, sickness among the children would bring a fresh and varied demand for charity. I fear that we sometimes became weary in well-doing and were apt to complain, not only as we might of the intemperance of Griffin as imposing heavy burdens on us, but of the shiftlessness of his wife.

"She takes no care of anything," said Mrs. Brown, a bustling personage who was ready to give, but kept a watchful eye on the fate of her bounty. "Nothing is half washed, or ever mended there; it is quite discouraging to try to assist them. The other day I saw her second girl out in the rain and mud with a muslin de laine dress on, which I made for her out of a good one my Amelia had outgrown, and oh! it was so defaced! I should never have known it

if it hadn't been for the way I made the sleeves. And then, to think we are helping to support that brute of a husband in his idleness!" Alas! if charity was only awarded to the wholly deserving, and discerning of its value, when would it be bestowed? The economist, I believe, like the poet, is "born, not made," and Nature had withheld the materials for this character from the luckless Mrs. Griffin. She certainly evinced some gratitude when articles designed for the comfort of her family were presented her, but showed little eagerness in the acquisition of care for their preservation.

At last, the owner of the wretched house the Griffins occupied warned them out. He had admitted them chiefly because he had frequent occasion to employ day laborers, and expected to receive payment of his rent in the services of the father. But finding that his dissipated habits precluded any dependance on him, and fearful that his family might become an expensive public charge, he gave them notice to leave. I had not heard of this, when one morning Mrs. Griffin, who was so far a model housewife, according to some people's requirements, that she rarely quitted her own precincts, presented herself at our house. Her usual slovenly appearance was, if possible, heightened, and her ordinary despairing look was mingled with a less passive expression of trouble. Gathering from her demeanor that something more than common had occurred, I inquired if her family were all well.

"Yes, they are all about, thank you," she replied, "but—we've got to move again."

"Indeed! and how is that?"

"Oh, Mr. Wathly (Worthly) says we must go away; he wants the house for somebody else. I don't know, I'm sure, where we are to go. There's no chance round here, and my man is gone way over to B—— to see if he can get a place. I'm dreadful sorry to leave, for I never expect to have so comfortable a place again, and the folks have been very kind to us."

Somewhat surprised to hear her regret leaving her miserable shelter, I endeavored to console her by representing that she would scarcely lose anything by a change in this respect.

"I've lived in more wuss houses than better ones than this," she answered, "and it's hard work to get along with two or three families under the same roof when there's children. "But," continued she, rather more calmly, "we've always had to keep moving about from place to place, and I've given up the hope of ever having a steady home. Years ago, when we hadn't much family, I used to try to persuade

my man to go out West, where land was cheap, and settle. We might have done so then, and had a good farm of our own by this time, if——"

Here a sudden recollection of the habits of her husband, so fatal to thrift anywhere, seemed to check her.

"I was brought up on a farm," she resumed, after a pause, "and we always had a plenty of breadstuff of our own raising. Then my father kept cows, and we had milk, and butter, and cheese to use just as we were a mind to. I often think of the good bowls of bread and milk I used to have when I was a girl, and wish I had some for my children. We had a beautiful garden too—with all kinds of sass that grows, and then my mother's posies—there, that makes me think of my arrant——"

Stepping forward, she lowered the corners of her apron, which, during her unusual fit of loquacity, I had observed she held tightly grasped in one hand, and displayed a fine carnation pink root. It had evidently been removed from its bed with care, precaution having been taken to retain a large quantity of earth around it. As she stood there holding her apron extended with its burden, I was irresistibly reminded of the current representations of nymphs bearing offerings of flowers or fruit in their drapery.

"I've got a pink root here," said she, "it come from a little slip that a lady give me where we lived last. I brought it with me, and sot it out in a corner of the 'tater patch, and took as good care of it as I could, hoping to see it bloom sometime or other, for I always loved flowers, though I hardly ever see or have any. But I can't carry it away, for most likely I shan't have any place to put it, and I don't want to leave it there for the cattle to trample down. So I've brought it over to you, if you'll accept of it, and give it room in your garden. It's the beautifullest pink I ever saw when it's in bloom."

Was this not a lesson for me, and for those who might have been hastily tempted to condemn and despise this woman in her low estate? I looked mentally back, and saw her, through long years, chained to unrelenting toil, which could not provide for the morrow, but merely meet the urgent call of the day. I thought of her endurance of want of every kind—of her deprivation of almost all that could minister to or gratify the taste, of which she was plainly not destitute. The love of the beautiful, so hopelessly banished from her house, had taken refuge in this solitary promise of a flower, unfolding itself amid the surrounding weeds and neglect. And then, when necessity required her to part with this little reserve made to a taste fostered

in childhood, how uncomplainingly was the sacrifice borne! Had I submitted as well to the loss, temporary and trivial to me, of a gratification of this kind, while this was all to her?

I led the way to the garden, and to that part of it which is occupied by flowers of this kind. "Your pink I will place here," said I, "among mine, and I will keep it for you. Remember it is yours whenever you claim it, or one as good. And now will you go to the other side of the garden and see the earlier flowers?"

She hesitated a moment only. "I should like to see them, but I don't dare to stop any longer, for I've left the children alone." So placing the pink root carefully by the spot pointed out for it, she shook the loose earth from her apron,

passed out of the gate, bade me good morning, and turned toward home. A few days after the family removed to a town a dozen miles distant, and I have not seen her since.

But her carnation lives, and unfolds its richly tinted and perfumed flowers to the warm breath of summer, though she who reared it so carefully sees it not. There—I know of an acquaintance who is going that way to-morrow, and I will send her a bouquet with some of its choicest flowers. Mrs. ———, my messenger, will laugh at the ill-chosen gift, and probably hint that a bundle of factory cloth would be more to the purpose. But is that perfect charity which provides for the wants of the body alone, and disregards other and perhaps as keenly felt needs?



## ALEXANDRINE AND HER LOVER; OR, A PASSAGE IN MY HISTORY.

BY MARY ANN PARKER.

### CHAPTER I.

A GREAT sorrow had come upon me; a sorrow that blasted every hope of happiness, shut out every gleam of consolation. It left me no refuge, save in religion, and even that seemed for a time but a miserable sanctuary; my prayers for strength and submission availed little in the first deep bitterness of grief.

That bitterness passed away, and the future lay before me; not glowing with bliss, as hope had once foretold it, nor wild with anguish, as despair had threatened that it should be, but cold, dreary, and purposeless. The love of father and of friends was all too poor to warm or cheer it; even the love of God, I thought, would hardly suffice.

Some trials are of evident benefit; we feel that we have come forth from them, stronger, wiser, purer than before; but trials such as mine teach no wisdom save suspicion; impart no strength but coldness and indifference. They wring the soul with all the agony of conflict, and leave it without the victory at last. It is hard to see the use or necessity of such sufferings, yet that they have both we cannot doubt.

After some weeks of vain repining I began to see and acknowledge this truth. It was a great comfort to me, but it was likewise a reproach. I felt that the affliction had not been rightly borne; sitting amid the ruins of my own happiness, I had selfishly forgotten the happiness of others. This, I resolved, should be so no longer; if I could not be gay and light-hearted, I would at least be cheerful; my dejection should no longer cast a gloom over the spirits of that kind father, who was now my dearest, as he had always been my truest, friend. I found it very difficult to keep this resolve; sadness and forlornness seemed my natural state, and the effort for a better frame of mind was painful in the extreme. I might, indeed, have given up the struggle, had not a circumstance, trifling in itself, important in its results, come to my aid.

It was a mild afternoon in February; the early part of the day had been glad with sunshine and blue sky, but now, toward four o'clock,

the brightness had vanished, and grey clouds hid the beaming azure. All nature wore that dreary, uncomfortable look peculiar to a "thaw"—water dropped ceaselessly from the eaves, and the melting snow offered but a treacherous footing. I sat by the window, drawing mentally all sorts of gloomy comparisons between the altered aspect of things without, and the sad change in my own existence. A ring at the door-bell very opportunely aroused me from these unprofitable musings. Looking from behind the curtain I recognized the postman.

"A letter for me?" I asked, as Betsey, who had answered the summons, came into the room.

"No, Miss Anne, it is for your father; shall I put it on the mantel-piece?"

"Give it to me, if you please; ah, it is from New Haven. What correspondent can father have there, I wonder." I examined the delicate little epistle without satisfying my curiosity; the graceful character of the address, and the dainty seal, gave no clue to the writer, except that she was a lady.

The mind worn-out by sorrow gladly seizes on the veriest trifle that interrupts its monotony of endurance, and I grew interested, excited even, about a letter which I should not have noticed a few months before. I handed it to my father as soon as he came in, and watched his countenance while he read—he laid it down with an air of great dissatisfaction.

"Who is your unknown correspondent?" I inquired. "I have been very curious about her ever since the letter arrived, and was quite tempted to break the seal, and see for myself who she was, and why she wrote."

"You would not have found anything very agreeable to reward you—it is from Mrs. Hamilton."

"My aunt Julia! How does it happen that she writes to you at this late day?"

"Because she has need of me, my dear; she would never have done it otherwise, you may be sure."

Mrs. Hamilton, I may as well state, was my mother's half-sister. She had been very gay and fashionable as a girl, and was married, early in

life, to a young officer of large fortune. There was a considerable difference of age, and very little congeniality of taste between my mother and herself, and when the former was united to a country gentleman of quiet habits, their intercourse became merely occasional, and not very gratifying to either party. Mrs. Hamilton, living for pleasure and excitement, found the country insufferably dull; my mother, accustomed to a round of duties and enjoyments tranquil as the stillness of a Sabbath day, was quite unfitted for her sister's worldly circle. Their visits became rarer and more rare, and were at last replaced by a lagging correspondence. After my mother's death, Mrs. Hamilton ceased to concern herself about us, and for five or six years we had heard nothing from her directly. The papers informed us of her husband's decease, and from mutual friends we learned that after six or eight months of "mourning" she had returned to society. Her daughter and only child, was reported to be a marvel of beauty and accomplishments.

The letter which my father now gave me to peruse was of no slight interest to us both. Mrs. Hamilton, it appeared, had been living very expensively, and had drawn largely on her fortune—so much so, indeed, that she had begun to meditate upon retirement and economy for a season. Her daughter's health, too, was much impaired, and the physicians recommended country air and exercise as indispensable for its restoration. She had, therefore, engaged a small house in the vicinity of New Haven, and was in the midst of preparations for a removal thither, when she received intelligence of the most startling nature. Mr. Armytage, the executor of her husband's estate, and likewise her daughter's guardian, was deeply involved in the various speculations of the day; not content with risking his own means, he appropriated the funds of the Hamilton property to his use. For a time he was successful—then fortune turned against him. He was ruined, and through his imprudence the Hamiltons were at once reduced to poverty. Such was the account contained in my aunt's letter.

"I have written thus freely to you, my dear brother," she said, "because I need advice, and you are the only one from whom I have a right to ask it. I hope you will soon respond, and give us your counsel and sympathy. Poor Alexandrine is quite overcome; she was very delicate before, and the shock was too much for her. She has been confined to her room for more than a week, and the doctor says her case looks unfavorable. God help me if I am to lose my child with all the rest."

"How sorry I am for them," I said, laying

down the letter. "It must be such a change for my cousin, beautiful and admired as she has been. What can we do to help them, I wonder?"

"There is no need of any wonder about the matter," replied my father; "I can write to Mrs. Hamilton to-morrow, and inform her that I have transferred a certain number of thousands of my state stocks to her name, and that I hope she will not suffer her own or her daughter's mind to be troubled about pecuniary matters. Then I can express my regret for her loss, and hope that Alexandrine is recovering. That will be a letter after her own heart."

"Indeed, I do not know why you should say so."

"Of course you don't; you would send three or four pages of sentiment and sympathy, and expect her to feel very much gratified with it. You have not seen much of the world yet, Anne; depend upon it Mrs. Hamilton will prize my half dozen lines far more than your well-filled sheet. What does she mean by asking my advice? Why to ask my assistance, to be sure, though she has too much pride, or delicacy, I suppose you would call it, to say so openly. My advice! yes, it will be very gladly taken if it comes in the shape I mentioned; the only question is, whether I shall choose to give it."

"I do not think there is any question about the matter—nor do you," I answered, looking at his smiling face. "You are rich, dear father, and what is money good for, if it does not make some one happy. You can spare enough for my aunt, and have more than abundance left; we do not need much, we two alone."

"And how will it be when we take a new partner into the firm," said my father, in a voice which he strove to render jocular—"when I have bridal expenses to pay, and a house to furnish, and who knows what else to do?"

"It will never be needed for me," I answered him.

"You must not be romantic, darling; you must not renounce the whole sex because you have found one man unworthy. I know you have suffered—I have seen it, though I said nothing. In truth, I did not know what it would be best to say. Oh, Anne, if your mother had lived, what a comfort and support she would have been to you in this trial! She would not have stood aloof, waiting for the result, as I have done."

"Do not speak of it, dear father; I knew you felt for me and with me. But how about my aunt and Alexandrine?"

"What a persevering little thing you are, my child! Well, I must promise to help them, I suppose, if only to get rid of your importunity."

"That is right—I was sure you meant to do it—and now let me tell you the best way to manage the business. I know very little of these relatives—I ought to know more. My cousin is ill—she needs attention. Let me go to them; I can relieve my aunt, and be of service to Alexandrine. It will be a good thing for me, too; will divert my thoughts and give me occupation. Here everything calls up the past. You must write to Mrs. Hamilton, offering what assistance you please, and mentioning my plan. I am sure I can be useful to them; you know I am a pretty good nurse."

"Yes," said my father, after some reflection, "you can go, but it seems a poor way of raising your spirits. Had you not better wait till the weather is settled, and then let me take you to Niagara—Saratoga—Newport—anywhere, and enjoy yourself? You shake your head; very well, my dear, just as you please. I only wish to see you contented."

After some further conversation about the matter, we separated for the night. I went to bed in a happier mood than I had known for weeks. I felt much interest in my cousin, and a great desire to see her. What was she like? was she so very beautiful? how should we suit each other? were questions I asked myself again and again. I fell asleep in the midst of projects for enlivening her sick-room, and making her time pass pleasantly.

On the morrow, my father wrote, as we had agreed—an answer to his letter soon arrived. Mrs. Hamilton was overflowing with gratitude for her "dear brother's" kindness, and would be delighted to receive "dear Anne." "Could she not come on immediately?" So, after a few needful preparations, I took leave of my father, and set out upon my journey. The close of the second day found me at the place of destination; a sufficiently neat, though small and unpretending house on the outskirts of New Haven. Mrs. Hamilton met me with great cordiality, and I felt at ease with her in a moment. She removed my travelling gear, installed me in a large chair near the fire, and insisted that I should have tea at once.

"Can I not see my cousin first?" I asked.

"By no means," she answered, with a smile; "wait till you are thoroughly warmed and comfortable. It would be cruel to take you from the fire after such a long, cold journey. I will have the tray brought up immediately, and we will take tea together."

We took it close to the glowing hearth, whose warmth and brightness were grateful indeed on such a chilly night. My aunt was very talkative,

and I thought very agreeable. She was handsome, too, though long past the age at which American women in general lose their good looks. She was tall and finely-shaped—her black hair untouched by time; she had dark eyes, and a very pleasant smile. "So far," thought I, "'tis a delightful disappointment—I did not expect to like my aunt at all. How will it be with Alexandrine?"

Tea over, we went up stairs to her room. She was lying on a kind of low couch, from which she partly rose to greet me. As she held out her hand, and spoke a few words of welcome in a musical voice, I thought her the loveliest person I had ever seen. She was quite thin, and extremely pale, but there was nothing attenuated or worn in her appearance; illness had spiritualized not impaired her beauty. She was a little creature—standing at my side her head would hardly have reached my shoulder—her hand, and the foot that peeped from beneath her white dressing-gown were small as those of a child. Her hair and eyes were of a light brown—her forehead not high, but broad and white—her every feature exquisitely formed; nothing could be more beautiful than the curve of her calm lips, and the long sweep of her eyelashes. An indescribable air of grace and refinement seemed natural to her, and I felt myself growing plainer and more awkward every moment; the contrast between us was so visible. During the evening I was much surprised and pained to see that my cousin's manner to her mother was peevish and undutiful; all her kind inquiries and tender care seemed to be regarded as officiousness, while a slight and unavoidable delay in the preparation of some cooling draught was harshly reprimanded. Mrs. Hamilton did not appear to notice the rudeness, but when I bade good night, and was about to seek my own room, she whispered to me, "You must not think anything of Allie's behavior this evening; she is very much fatigued. When she is well no one can have a sweeter disposition." So I excused my cousin as her mother had done.

I found this not quite so easy when, after the first restraint wore off, the peevishness was exercised toward me in person; when I was told to do this or that in authoritative tones, and sharply reproved if the service or the manner in which it was rendered failed to please. More than once a hasty answer rose to my lips; but I checked it, and remembering that Alexandrine was very ill, determined not to notice, even in my own mind, the little ebullitions of her temper. This plan succeeded perfectly, and I soon thought no more of her caprices than we do of the occasional

fretfulness of a lovely child. Then she was very sweet at times; very gentle and affectionate—how I wished the mood could be perpetual!

Alexandrine's room, where most of my time was spent, had a very cheerful, pleasant air; you would not have taken it for the abode of an invalid by any means. There was no stand, covered with vials, near the bedside; no tumbler full of nauseas draught upon the window-sill. Alexandrine detested such things, and when the medicine had been administered, she ordered that all traces of it should be instantly removed. Nor was the room darkened, as is so often the case; the windows were shaded only by light draperies of muslin, which let in the sunlight freely through their transparent folds. In the centre of the apartment stood a large table, loaded with books and engravings, while the piano occupied a recess at the end of the mantel. When Alexandrine was able to bear the noise her canaries were brought in, and their clear warble seemed like a renewed song of cheerfulness and hope.

My cousin's case, though one of serious danger, was by no means hopeless. She was able to listen while I read, and to converse occasionally; her taste was exquisite, and she was gratified when I appealed to her advice about my drawing or embroidery—thus reading, conversation, and sketching formed my chief employments, engaged my best attention.

Was I happy in this quiet life? No, I cannot say that exactly. The grass, trampled by rude feet, does not spring up erect as ever where the heavy step has passed; the heart crushed as mine had been cannot regain its early gladness. But I was serene and content, feeling myself useful and affectionately regarded; and happiness more vivid than this I did not expect to enjoy upon earth.

Some weeks had passed since my arrival at Mrs. Hamilton's, when I sat one evening by the fireside, thinking of home and of my father. I pictured to myself what he was doing at that moment—sitting, doubtless, in the back parlor, with the stand drawn to the fire, and the evening paper airing on a chair back near at hand. Perhaps as he waited thoughts of his child came over him, and he wished me there again; I wished it, too, and grew quite tender over the scene my fancy had created.

There was a ring at the door—a sound very unusual in that quiet house. Alexandrine roused herself from the sofa, where she had lain in sleep or meditation for the last half hour; I threw fresh coal upon the fire and lighted the tall wax tapers on the mantel-piece; while thus occupied I heard

the hall-door close, and a moment after a man passed down the gravel-walk and through the little gate. My aunt came in presently in excellent spirits.

"Who has called, do you think?" she said, in an animated voice. "A great friend of yours, Alexandrine."

"I don't know," replied her daughter, languidly; "Mr. Arnold, perhaps."

"Not at all—but I won't keep you in suspense—it was Mr. Layton."

"Indeed!" cried Alexandrine, with a brightening face; "why did you not ask him to come up and see me, mamma?"

"He was in great haste, and would not even sit down. He has been absent a month, attending to his sick father, which accounts for his not having called on us before. He heard of your illness while he was away, and stopped here on his return home. To-morrow he is coming to make a visit to you, *in particular*."

"I am glad of it," said Alexandrine; "it will be pleasant to see some one again. To think," she added, bitterly, "that we should be driven to *that*! glad to see just *one* of the old faces!"

"Really, Allie," I observed, "you pay me a poor compliment—as if I were not 'some one'! And you are lonely, too, it seems; now I had flattered myself that we were getting on very cosily and comfortably together, and it troubles me to find out the true state of the case."

"It should not, Anne," she replied, very gently; "I am grateful to you, and like exceedingly to have you with me. But suppose yourself in my place. While you are rich, and well and happy, you are surrounded by friends. Suddenly there is a change. You are poor, and sick and sorrowful; you need sympathy and companionship, but nobody comes near you. Not one of all the kind people who praised, and admired, and professed to love you, ever crosses your threshold. Do you not think you would be glad to find that there was one person who liked you for yourself alone?"

"Certainly, Allie; you are quite right. And it is to be hoped," I added, rather mischievously, "that you will value Mr. Layton's constancy as it deserves." Alexandrine looked vexed, and her mother signed to me to say no more.

"It is rather an awkward subject," she said, as we took our tea together in the front basement. "I don't mind telling you about it, as you are a relation, but it is quite a secret. We spent some weeks here last summer with Mrs. Arnold—not in this part of the town though—she has a splendid residence in W— Place, and, by the way, I think she might have called

before now. Mr. Layton is the pastor of St. Luke's, where Mrs. Arnold has a pew; Alexandrine and he became acquainted, and liked each other very much; in fact, (I can say it to you, my dear,) he fell in love with her. He was very often at the house, and I grew uneasy about it.

"Alexandrine," I said to her one day, "do you intend to marry Mr. Layton? She blushed and said he had never asked her to do it yet. But he will, I am sure of it," said I, "and then what will you tell him? She would not give me any answer but laughed, and said there was time enough yet to think of that, and that the morrow must take care of itself. At last I spoke to her very seriously, and asked if she really thought of settling down as a clergyman's wife after all her gaiety and conquests? 'No,' she said, 'never; it was absurd to think of such a thing.' Then I told her plainly that it was very wrong to encourage the young man as she did, but she said Mr. Layton was too sensible to think of marrying a giddy girl like her, and he was an agreeable man, and it would be too bad to give up his society just for a mere notion of mine. I knew better—I knew he loved her all the time, and I think she knew it too."

"Oh, don't say that, aunt Julia," I exclaimed; "Alexandrine is not so heartless."

"Why it was not heartlessness exactly; you see she liked him, and could not bear to give him up; I don't much wonder at it, for the young men at Mrs. Arnold's were a dull set enough. So they used to be together a great deal—Alexandrine would sing for him, and he read to her, and they played chess, and had very pleasant times. I always stayed in the room as much as possible, for I wanted to prevent an explanation; to tell the truth, my dear, I was a little afraid of the result. When a girl's feelings are interested impracticable things grow easy, and 'love in a cottage' looks very well at a distance. But, in spite of all my care, he found an opportunity, and Alexandrine was obliged to tell him that she should always esteem him as a friend—but nothing more."

"Indeed!" was my inward and indignant comment. "Here are some new lights on character truly. Alexandrine encourages a man whom she intends to refuse, and her mother tells me of it with the utmost coolness—oh, Allie, I am sorry to hear this of you!"

"I never could make out Mr. Layton's reasons for behaving as he did," aunt Julia continued, placidly, unaware of my disapprobation; "her refusal did not seem to affect him in the least. He kept on coming to the house just as before—

and to-morrow he will be here solely on her account. Sometimes I have thought it was pride; and that he was determined to let us see that the rejection did not trouble him so greatly, after all."

"That would be a strange pride indeed for a clergyman," I said, and I thought "it is far more likely that he comes here because he still loves Alexandrine, and hopes to win her."

When we went up stairs my cousin was in a very gracious humor; gentle and cheerful, she appeared more than ever lovely. But I could not admire her as before; a feeling of distrust, almost of aversion, filled me at the remembrance of her conduct. It was impossible to be with her long, however, and resist the influence of her sweetness and beauty; ere the evening was half over I found myself framing excuses for her, and trying to justify her behavior. I could not succeed very well in the attempt, and so, unwilling to dislike or blame her, dropped the subject.

## CHAPTER II.

I EXPECTED Mr. Layton's visit with some curiosity, partly because I was interested in the person who had so nearly won my cousin, partly because Mrs. Hamilton's account had led me to form a picture of him in my own mind, and I wished to observe how it corresponded with the original. As accompanied by my aunt he entered the room, and gracefully renewed his acquaintance with Alexandrine, I was agreeably impressed by his appearance. He was tall, and rather slight, though not conspicuously so—gentlemanly-looking and well-dressed, but altogether free from that air of *exquisitism* which I so dislike in a clergyman, and which is rarely to be noticed, it seems to me, except in those who give more time and thought to their attire than is quite becoming in the followers of Christ. So much for figure; his face was not handsome, but it was intelligent, intellectual even, and had besides an expression of purity and goodness, so that on seeing him you would feel in your heart—as I did in mine—that here was a man in whom you might confide implicitly, and who would never wrong your trust.

Alexandrine's cool and tranquil manner varied a little when this old friend, this once lover addressed her. A blush rose to her clear cheek, and she looked at the floor instead of the face of her visitor; but soon this was over, and she regained her habitual self-possession. And then how lovely she was! how well she talked, and how animatedly! it was easy to see how, a

year before, in the full bloom of health and beauty, she had captivated the heart and imagination of the young clergyman. I watched him narrowly as they conversed, wondering within myself what were his feelings at meeting her thus, altered by illness, ruined in fortune, attainable, in the eyes of the world, by those of humbler pretensions than his own. Would he hail the change with joy, and now, when there was no chance of rivalry, press the suit which she had rejected in more brilliant days? Or had the feeling which could induce him to forego pride and forget humiliation long since died out in his heart. His manner gave no clue to his thoughts; it was easy, kind, *fatherly*, I would have said, did not his age render the expression ridiculous. Certainly there was about him neither the air of a disappointed, nor of a hopeful lover.

He said very little to me, directing his conversation mainly to Alexandrine; that was very natural, I thought, and seeing how friendly they were together, and how pleased in each other's company, I began to build in the air numerous fine castles, which I believed they might one day inhabit.

When he left us, Alexandrine lay down on her sofa and turned her face to the wall; there was no sob, nor sound of grief, yet I felt certain that the face, so bright and happy a few minutes before, was now bathed in tears of bitter sorrow. But that to my mind was little matter—for by-and-by, when through suffering she had been purified, she would yet, I hoped and trusted, taste the full blessedness of that love over whose loss she now mourned.

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Days and weeks went by; the storms of early spring gave place to the sunshine of May, and still Alexandrine lingered in her sick-room. There had been very little change since I first came to nurse her—nothing to alarm us. She was a little weaker—did not sit up quite as long—complained more frequently of weariness—but that was all. We still hoped much for her ultimate recovery.

Mr. Layton, in the meantime, visited us very often; scarcely a day passed without him. Occasionally he brought a new book and read awhile for us—since the weather had grown milder and the flowers ventured to look out, he rarely came without a bunch of violets or anemones gathered in his country walks. Alexandrine was very fond of flowers, as of everything graceful and beautiful; so it was very natural that she should wish to have these little woodland blossoms always near her lying on her pillow, or clasped in her thin fingers, or placed in water on the

stand, where she could see them from her bed.

The influence of Mr. Layton's frequent presence had been very beneficial to my cousin. From the time of his first call I think she had striven to be milder and less exacting than before. But a fretful mood long indulged is not easily overcome, and once, when Mr. Layton was present, she spoke to me in the old dictatorial, fault-finding way. What a look he gave her then—so full of surprise and rebuke! She quailed under it, her eyes dropped, her cheeks burned with shame—truly, I pitied her from my heart, and thought much more of her distress than of what had brought it upon her. I was frightened lest he should go on to expostulate with her, but he probably saw that there was no need and forebore remark. I do not think Alexandrine ever spoke a harsh word to her mother or myself after that day. Whether it were salutary shame or a better feeling that kept her from it I cannot venture to say.

It was not long before Mr. Layton spoke openly to my dear cousin of her condition—not withholding hope, but telling her of her great danger, and urging her to prepare for the worst. I wondered at his boldness when he went on to speak of her duty to God, and of the necessity of turning to Him while mind and strength were left her. Very often I had wished to speak to Alexandrine of that eternity which concerns us so nearly; often had I tried to introduce the subject, but a certain cool, defiant manner which she invariably assumed silenced me at once. She would fain have put on the same manner toward the young clergyman, but her coldness melted away before his earnest, affectionate entreaties, and I believe she joined sincerely in his prayer that she might, living or dying, devote herself to Him who can alone suffice for our happiness.

After this a gradual change was visible in her—she sometimes asked me to read God's word aloud, and I often saw her praying fervently when she thought herself unnoticed. No person, unless it be one who has watched by the sick bed of some dear friend unreconciled to heaven, can realize my joy when I knew that Alexandrine had made her peace with God, and that, in the worst event of her illness, we had only the temporary pangs of death to dread for her. Even her mother, worldly as she had always seemed, shed tears of gratitude when she heard this blessed news.

I think that no one in Alexandrine's situation could have a kinder or more judicious adviser than Mr. Layton proved to be. He met so well the many difficulties of her case—sympathized

so fully in her doubts and fears—so tenderly encouraged her to trust in the Divine Mercy. Then as her views became clearer, and her hopes stronger he admonished her wisely, and endeavored to give her an elevated ideal of the Christian life. My own weak purposes of good were many a time strengthened as I listened to him.

One thing surprised me not a little in the intercourse of these two; that in all their unreserved communication no reference was ever made to the past, unless in the most casual manner. If I had not known of their previous acquaintance, I should never have guessed it from anything that they said. One day, however, a slight remark called forth a reference to their former knowledge of each other which I thought not very flattering, hardly courteous on the part of Mr. Layton. He had been reading *Thanatopsis* for us; he read beautifully, and the last lines fell upon my ear like a strain of solemn, yet cheerful music.

"So live that when thy summons comes to join  
The innumerable caravan that moves  
To that mysterious realm, where each must take  
His chamber in the silent halls of death,  
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,  
Scourged to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed  
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,  
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

He closed the book and turned to Alexandrine, who was looking very serious—thinking, perhaps, how soon that summons might come for her. To draw her from the melancholy mood into which she was falling he began to talk of poetry in general, and of American poetry in particular, till she became interested and threw off her forebodings.

"We have two poets," he remarked, "whose genius places them in the first rank, and it is a little singular that the works of both are characterized by the same spirit—a beautiful repose informing and pervading the whole."

"You mean Bryant and Longfellow?" I said, "and yet their writings are totally dissimilar."

"True—Longfellow's have the repose of a statue, which art has perfected to the most harmonious beauty—Bryant's the repose of nature on a summer morning, such as we have often seen when the air is full of the song of birds and the murmur of the wind, and the whole world is instinct with life—but such a calm, serene life that it seems the holiest quiet."

"Which do you prefer?" I asked.

"Nature for me above everything—and you, Miss Hamilton?"

"Judge for yourself," she answered, smiling.

Mr. Layton was embarrassed. "From what I knew of you in past times," he said, "I should say you valued art the more highly; yes, I really think you had very little taste for nature, *au naturel*, if I may express myself so awkwardly. A fine piece of landscape gardening would have pleased you better than any 'unimproved' prospect, however beautiful."

"You give me credit for a contracted view of things in good earnest," said Alexandrine, seemingly annoyed.

"Those who have been like you," he answered, gravely, "in the world and of the world from their infancy, must find their vision sadly limited."

"I am not near-sighted," said Alexandrine, shortly; "you refer to mental, or perhaps to moral vision."

"Yes, to be candid, I do—surely you must have found it so, Alexandrine," he replied, calling her for the first time by her name. "Your views of life, of duty, of truth were very contracted, a year ago, compared with what they now are, I presume? I did not intend to give you a lecture when asking which of our two great poets you preferred—still, where a choice was to be made, I could hardly doubt on which side your sympathies would be. For in you art always took the precedence, and much as you owed to nature, you paid all your devotions at the shrine of her younger sister."

"Perhaps you misunderstood me then and now," said my cousin, quietly; "at any rate, I like Bryant better than Longfellow, and sympathize more fully with him. You must go to Anne there for a devotee of art—*she* thinks the author of the 'Balm of Life' has hardly his peer in English poetry."

I felt heartily ashamed as she spoke thus, well knowing that nature, and that of a very uncouth sort, was alone visible in me.

After he had gone I thought over this little conversation, and was glad that it had occurred. The slight mutual reproach would, I hoped, be of service in leading the way to explanation and to perfect confidence. "The time will soon come," I thought, "when he will find that Alexandrine used no *artifice* with him—and when she will learn, that however his judgment might condemn her conduct, his heart excused and pleaded for her through it all."

### CHAPTER III.

BUT now when all around me was so sweet and tranquil, and the remembrance of my one great sorrow had almost ceased to give me pain, a new care began to prey upon my mind.

Mr. Layton came as often as ever, and I was sure that it gave him pleasure to come moreover. As he opened the door his face fairly lighted up; I saw it many a time. Alexandrine was happy in his visits—that was equally certain—and she was becoming every day more worthy of him. All seemed to be going on exactly as I had wished—nay, as I *still* wished. Only for one uneasy, uncomfortable suspicion I felt I should be happy.

This suspicion—I may as well confess it at once. I began to fancy that Mr. Layton's coming was a matter of more interest to me than I wished to have it. I very well recollect the day when it first arose in my mind. We had not seen the young minister for a week, and the time went heavily for me; at last he came, and the joy with which I met him—a joy so disproportioned to our relations with each other—made me tremble. The first moment when I was alone, secure from interruption, I sat down to think over the matter thoroughly and dispassionately. Was it possible that I, who had believed my heart seared by suffering against such a feeling, could love this man whom I regarded almost as my cousin's husband—this man who had never addressed a word to me beyond that of ordinary courtesy—who had never in any way sought me, or tried to win affectionate regard? Alone as I was my cheeks burned at the thought. Was not such a weakness unjust to myself, base even toward Alexandrine? "Not if I do not try to make him care for me," some inward voice replied.

Then, as I fancied, I carefully went over all the evidence which memory furnished, for and against the existence of this unfortunate feeling. The result, warranted or not, was a belief that Mr. Clayton was nothing more to me than a friend—a very dear friend, I admitted, as was almost unavoidable after all I had seen of his kindness to my cousin, and all we both knew of his devotion to duty. "Very strange if I cannot esteem a man without being in love with him!" I exclaimed, indignantly, as if in reply to some unfounded accusation; "and as for my being so glad to see him, why it is so quiet here that I would naturally be glad to see *any* friend. One thing is certain—I never blush when he meets me, nor feel embarrassed in his presence—I was never more at ease with any one in my life." Still in spite of all this reasoning my conscience was not entirely clear, and I no longer met our visitor with unmingled pleasure.

A great change for the worse in Alexandrine soon effectually diverted attention from myself. A severe hemorrhage from the lungs occurred, and left her in a state of extreme prostration.

Hitherto I had been the principal nurse, my aunt only spending portions of the day in the sick-room, but now we were both in constant attendance on our dear sufferer. If Alexandrine slept, we moved noiselessly about lest the slightest sound should disturb her repose—if she slept longer than usual we looked fearfully at each other, dreading that death had stolen upon slumber. Oh, the weariness, the anxiety of that watching, when we never felt secure that an hour might not bring desolation to our home.

At last Alexandrine rallied; a slight improvement was visible from day to day, and we began to hope as those *do* hope who have never witnessed the deceitful progress of the disease which had fastened on our poor invalid. The warm, bright days of summer seemed to bring healing with them; every morning Allie declared herself better and stronger. From timid hope of her recovery we passed almost to full assurance of it. Alas! how blind we must have been not to see that with all this boasted strength she was unable to sit in the easiest chair for two hours together—that conversation wearied her—that she was totally unable to endure excitement of any kind!

One afternoon when she lay sleeping and her mother sat beside the bed, I stole quietly down stairs for a walk in the little garden. While there I saw Mr. Layton coming; I would have hurried into the house, but he had already noticed me and bowed. I was obliged in mere civility to wait till he joined me, and we walked together up the strip of graveled path that led to the hall-door.

"Allie was asleep a few minutes since," I said, as we entered the house; "I will go up and see if she has awakened. She will be pleased that you have come."

"Do not run any risk of disturbing her," he answered; "we had better wait in the parlor till we hear some sound above."

I did not like this *tele-a-tele* with him, but knew not at the moment how to avoid it—so we went in. Alone with him for the first time, the old suspicion awhile forgotten, came back with tenfold force, and I fairly trembled with emotion. He began to inquire about my cousin—did we think her really unmistakably better? I told him what we believed, and he seemed very glad to hear it; then he went on to speak of his early acquaintance with her, and how lovely she was at that time.

"You can form very little idea of her beauty when in health," he said; "it was absolutely faultless, and yet hardly so striking as that air of grace and refinement which you must have



noticed in her. Dress was not with her a mere coquetry—it was an absolute art. She never wore anything unbecoming—she never said or did anything which seemed out of place, or which had been better left unsaid or undone. With all this there was nothing chilling or conventional about her—it was such a perfection of art that it seemed like nature."

"How did you first chance to meet?" I asked.

"You may well say that since our spheres lay so far apart—yet it happened easily enough. A young friend of hers—Miss Weldon, of whom you may have heard her speak—had imbibed an idea which would have seemed strange enough to most of her circle! no less than this, that to pass life in a round of frivolous amusements was a sin for which she would be held accountable hereafter. She grew very unhappy and anxious for instruction in duty, but as often happens in such cases wished to conceal her feelings. Alexandrine only was in her confidence, and encouraged her to seek the advice of a clergyman. Mrs. Arnold (whom they were visiting at the time) belonged to my church; I was fresh from the seminary then, full of projects for good and active in carrying them out. I believed myself heart and soul devoted to my Master's cause. Well, they came to me; I was able to remove some of the young lady's doubts, and gave her such advice as seemed most fitting. That was the beginning of my acquaintance with your cousin."

I thought he was going on to tell me that he loved her, and prepared myself to listen with composure.

"I called once or twice at Mrs. Arnold's," he continued, "and of course admired Alexandrine. By-and-by a change took place in Miss Weldon's feelings, and she became, I hope, a sincere Christian. It appeared to me, enthusiastic as I was, that your cousin could not remain unaffected by the alteration in her friend. I talked to her of religion, and she listened with apparent interest—we discussed matters of theology—pooh! I smile to think of it now. I suppose Alexandrine was sincere enough—she regarded Christianity as a question of aesthetics probably. I did not guess this at the time, and thought her mind open to the truth. I read much that I might combat her objections—I devoted myself to the conversion of this one soul which had suddenly grown dearer to me than those of all my flock."

"You are not to suppose that this interest was entirely spiritual—I had early learned of Alexandrine what she never learned of me. She was everything to me—a woman, an angel rather, of beauty and grace and harmony—an immortal nature for which I was responsible—a tender,

trusting nature which I was to lead to God. For I never doubted that Alexandrine felt for me as I for her.

"The awakening from the trance was very sudden. I told her of my love and my hopes—she assured me very coldly that they were wasted upon her. 'I have dreaded something of this kind,' she said, 'and feared that I ought not to be with you as I have been—but I liked and esteemed you so thoroughly that I was unwilling to give up your society at any risk.' And she went on no doubt with very friendly intentions to show me how unfitted she was for the position of my wife, and to excuse herself for having encouraged and rejected me.

"There was no need—I did not require consolation. The tears fell from my eyes at once. She who, for her own gratification, could thus trifle with the dearest happiness of another was not the one whom I had loved. All the glory of innocent, trusting girlhood went from her that moment and forever. I saw her as she was—as she had described herself—a woman, given wholly to the world—living only for excitement, enjoyment, fashionable triumphs. I clearly comprehended that the noble impulses, the lofty thoughts which I had so admired in her were no part of her real nature; they were something which she would gladly have lived down, crushed out had that been possible. The refusal of the love I had so earnestly desired gave me no pain—my disenchantment was complete and lasting.

"Still when it was all over—when there was no more dreaming, no more rapturous hope—I experienced a sense of loss. It seemed as if the duties of my sacred office were not enough to occupy my time and thoughts—as if an absorbing interest had been suddenly withdrawn from life. I felt with grief and remorse that I had given to a creature of the infinite that place in my affections which belonged to Him alone. Knowing and repenting of my error I endeavored to avoid it for the future—I entered with zeal into new pursuits and plans, and in the effort to do good to others forgot my individual aims and selfish disappointments.

"I saw Alexandrine frequently—I took a curious pleasure in contemplating her, now that the influence which had transfigured her in my eyes was over. She was to me like a monument over the grave of buried passion; it was a queer feeling; I cannot quite describe it. If the woman whom Pygmalion's prayers evoked from the marble had lived until his love was dead and then returned into her native stone, he might have looked on her exquisite beauty very much as I now looked on Alexandrine."

He was silent a moment, then said, "During her illness I have visited her as a friend and clergyman, and am glad to think my presence has been useful to her."

"It has indeed," I answered. "To you, under God, she owes her peace in the present, and her hopes for the future."

"Perhaps you think it strange," he added, "that I have given you this long history, and have described so minutely what I have felt for your cousin—but it has not been done without a reason. Do you wonder, Anne, that one who has seen you every day for weeks—who has witnessed your kindness, your patience, your gentleness, should admire and love you for it? Yes, I must speak at last. I shall not say that life without you would be desolate and wretched—that would be profane and irreligious—but I do say that with you it will be dear and bright beyond expression. What reply can you give me?"

As he spoke, a voice in my heart responded. I did not blush or tremble—there seemed no cause for such emotion. I looked up frankly in his face, and in that look he read my answer.

This then was love! How different from the wild passion to which I had once given the name—how infinitely purer and better!

That evening I told all to Alexandrine; it was not a long recital, and she was an interested listener. "I cannot see," I said at last, "how you could be insensible to so much merit."

A blush covered her cheek—"Perhaps I was not so insensible," she answered. "Shall I tell you all about it, Anne? When I refused Mr. Layton I did it with regret—I loved him very truly, but I knew it would be a profanation for me to become with my worldly feelings the wife of a clergyman. I submitted that he should think me heartless and trifling rather than let him know the truth."

"Since my illness things have appeared to me in a different light—when I first became religious I felt as though the obstacle to our union were removed, and I loved him without reserve. Do not think me unmaidenly, Anne—I was only mis-

taken. He came here so often—he liked so much to be with us, and I thought it was all for me. I never looked upon him as otherwise than mine.

"You do not know how I felt when you first came here; I am proud by nature, and it was so humiliating to feel that we were utterly dependant on you and yours. It would have been bad enough if we had been familiar from childhood, but to owe everything to those whom we had neglected in our prosperity was dreadful to me. Yet it was unavoidable. When you came I did not know you, and thought you wished to feast your eyes upon our poverty, and think how much we were indebted to you."

"Oh, Allie," I cried, "that was *too* ungenerous."

"I know it," she said, "I feel how unworthy the suspicion was. I was harsh to you—cynical, ungrateful. By-and-by your kindness conquered me—I admired and loved you—I wished that your goodness to me might find a fit reward. Yet when I saw that reward prepared I was selfish in my grief. I could not bear to give up the love I had so long considered as my own. I prayed for help, for release from selfishness, and it was given; but in a different way from what I expected. The violent conflict of feeling told upon my feeble health, and that hemorrhage was the result. Then the bitterness of trial was taken from me; near to the grave and near to heaven, earthly love no longer wrung my heart; I resigned it without a pang. I could have wished to conquer by myself—without the aid of that prostration which brought eternity to my bedside, as it were; but all is for the best."

"Since then I have watched you both with tender interest, and have taken pleasure in the thought that by means of my illness two such natures were brought together. You are good and will be happy—I rejoice that it is so. And for the little time that is left you will not be jealous if I keep up a cousinly regard for him?" she asked, while a bright smile parted the dear lips that were soon to smile no more.

## ERIC'S WEDDING-DAY.

BY H. J. VERNON.

DOWN far below the sunshine and the green grass, in the black, steep abysses of the largest copper mine of Fahlun, sat Eric Sture, with his fellow miners. Black jacks and wooden bowls, filled with brandy and nut-brown ale, were in every hand. A bright log-fire blazed and crackled in the midst of them—for, though it was summer above, it was chill and dark in the heart of the copper mines. The laugh and the jest passed merrily from lip to lip, and the miners told tales of Jons Lundsbracka, of Gustavus Vasa and his Dalecarlians, and of the Ferry of Brunbek and the defeat of the Danes. Healths were drunk, good wishes uttered, and each rough hand in turn was stretched forth to grasp that of Eric Sture, for it was the eve of his wedding-day, and on the morrow he would be married—married to Ebba, the fair-haired darling of Oluf, the wood-cutter in the beech forest above; Ebba, whose step was as light on the mountain-side as the foot of the mountain deer; whose eyes were as blue as the deep bright lake; and whose voice was sweet and joyous as the songs of the birds high up in the leafy branches of her native forest.

Eric Sture was that night glad at heart, as he sat with his comrades by the red light of the wood fire, and listened to the wild North legends; for he loved Ebba deeply and tenderly, and he had loved her long.

It was a wild scene. All around, the rough-hewn walls and huge jutting crags were glistening with a dull copper hue, and streaked with deadly verdigris. Dark avenues and narrow passages, cut in the solid rock, and looking like the burrowing places of the gnome people, branched off on every side, stretching and winding far away into steep and dangerous excavations, rich with the precious ore, and known only to the fearless foot of the miner. High up, frail wooden bridges, consisting frequently of a single plank, were thrown from height to height, above clefts fathomless to the eye. Over these the hardy workman crossed with his heavy burthen, never heeding the creaking board that dips and trembles with his weight, or the black chasm below, which, if his foot slipped, must be his grave. Here and there small wooden huts were erected; and along the smooth, perpendicular walls of the shaft, narrow pathways, like shelves,

were cut in places that would otherwise have been inaccessible. In the distance, little glimmering lights were waving to and fro, crossing each other, now advancing, now retreating, now fading away and becoming absorbed in the gloom. These were torches carried by the miners in remote parts of the excavations; the men were not visible, and the little dancing tongues of flame looked like wills-o'-the-wisp, or the disembodied spirits in Dante's "Inferno," who were transformed into living fires. At long intervals a distant gathering sound was heard, reverberating in deep echoes through the mine like thunder, or an earthquake; sometimes the noise was followed by a faint shout far away, or by a thick, rolling, sulphureous smoke. This was from where they were blasting the rock, and rending asunder the hidden veins of mineral. All around the fire lay the party of happy workmen. Fantastic lights and shadows flittered and waved on the crags beneath which it was kindled. High above their heads was impenetrable blackness; and higher still, (so high that it seemed miles away) a spot of blue sky looked down upon them like a protecting face, clear and calm, with the pale stars shining through.

To this point Eric's eyes were constantly directed. His thoughts were with the upper life of the world; with Ebba and Oluf in the beech forest.

The *Skals*, or health-drinkings, grew by degrees less frequent. One by one the noisy revellers were silenced; their heads sank to the ground, the cups dropped from their hands; an inarticulate murmur succeeded to the legend and the song. They slept. At length Eric Sture remained the only watcher by the fire. Seated on a coil of rope, his chin resting on his hand, his eye fixed on the glowing ashes, he sat and thought of his past life and his future; of his childhood and his youth; of his love, his long season of doubt and hope, and of his present happiness. His earliest recollections were of the mine. Its dark cavernous recesses, and its rugged declivities, had been his first home, his play-ground, his native place. The bright world above was for many years as a terrestrial Paradise, a region of holiday enchantment to the child of the mines—a land too beautiful to be

dwelt in always. On Sundays, he remembered, his father would love to take him regularly to that upper earth. How he used to look forward during the whole week to that glorious holiday! To the village church, standing in its little garden of roses and linden trees; to the white-haired pastor and his mild words of loving peacefulness; to the wondrous altar-piece above the communion table, wherein Jacob was depicted with his holy dream, the ladder of moonbeams, and the bright-winged angels descending to earth, and ascending to the uppermost heaven! And afterward, when the service was concluded, the joy it was to him to wander with his kind father in the beech forest and the flowering meadows; to pluck the sun-berries and blackberries, and to gather the sweet-scented field blooms in his cap; to listen to the silver singing of the birds, and to float his tiny paper vessels on the lilled-surface of the lake. Not the least delightful of the Sabbath holiday was his meeting with little Ebba, the darling playfellow of his childish sports. How delicious was the evening meal which they partook regularly at the homestead in the beech forest on those happy occasions; how rich the white curdled milk, fresh from the pan; how sweet the hard, black bread, flavored with aniseed and coriander, and the oaten-cakes which crowned the entertainment! Then, when the feast was over, and Eric's father and Oluf, the wood-cutter, went out into the pretty garden to smoke their pipes and drink their foaming ale, he remembered how he had loved to chase the fleet little fairy through the mossy boles of the trees, beside the still lake, and along the green lawny slopes and glades of the forest; how they had often stood then, as they stood frequently even now, watching the red sunset on the mountains and tree-tops, and sadly awaiting the moment of its disappearance, for that was the signal of their separation, and of Eric's return to his underground home. How gloomy and comfortless it seemed there! how dreary the descent in the swinging tub! how harsh the clanking chains that lowered them into the mine!

"And yet," murmured Eric, as he looked around him, and at his sleeping friends; "and yet I love the place, and the kind hearts in it! 'Tis an old familiar friend to me now. God bless it!"

The smouldering embers of the hollow-burnt fire fell in, crashing; a few sparks flew giddily upward; then the pale red embers waxed fainter and fainter, and the last dying gleam faded and expired.

Eric looked up once more to the far sky, and saw that it was morning.

Other eyes—sacred, gentle, pure blue eyes, full of love and trustful as his own—were looking forth upon that morning sunrise, in the upper world, from the windows of Oluf's forest home. Ebba was leaning forth, bathing her bright hair and her white hands in the fresh sunbeams, and gathering from the rose-bushes that clustered round the casement some dewy leaves and buds for her bridal coronal.

The simple dwelling had been erected on the skirts of the wide forest. At the back is stretched away for miles—dark, close, silent, and almost impenetrable to the distant mountains; a sea of waving leaves, of massy shades, and tangled underwood. All around the cottage, Oluf had cleared a broad space and planted it as a garden, with flowers, and fruits, and trees—not the lordly beeches of the forest, but graceful drooping willows, beautiful pines, tapering firs with scarlet cones, fragrant birches, blossoming apple and cherry trees, and exquisite laburnums golden with long-dropping bunches of yellow flowers. Rose-bushes, violets, and king-cups looked charming in the little beds of brown mould that dotted the green turf; and long strawberry beds, silvered all over with white blossoms, stretched along each side of the garden path. Farther off was the rustic gate, and beyond that a wide lawn sloped gently down to the margin of the rippling lake. When Oluf had first come to dwell in the forest, bringing with him his little orphan babe, the rude hut had been built by his own hands in a close dark glen, surrounded by tall trees. Slowly his loving care had made the rude hut into a pleasant homestead, had cleared away the beeches, had planted the flowers and fruit trees, had opened the prospect to the shining waters, and all for the sake of his little Ebba, his only treasure.

And this was her wedding morning. She looked earnestly and fondly over the lake and its green islets; for, from the opposite shore, where Fahlun rose with its spires and pinnacles, and where yon dark cloud of hanging smoke looked dull in the clear air, marking the locality of the copper mines—thence Eric Sture, with his friends and comrades, with music and flowers, and branches of evergreens, would come over the waters to make her his bride.

At last the distant boats appeared far away, and Ebba hastened to deck herself in the white kirtle and scarlet boddice of a bride. The young girls—her friends and neighbors—came to bring her nosegays and good wishes, and to help to clasp the gilded belt around her waist, to hang the necklaces of beads upon her neck, and to crown her fair locks with the silver-gilt coronet

which had served for two centuries to adorn the maidens of the district on their bridal mornings. On this crown a wreath of wild roses and cypress was laid; and, clustering in thick curls, her bright locks fell over her shoulders.

Now the boats draw near, impelled by the arms of the laughing rowers; violins and loud voices, chanting a bridal song, come merrily on the breeze. The boats are moored to the stems of the weeping willows, and the bridegroom and his fellow miners leaped on shore.

Eric comes first, handsome and happy, with flowers in the red band of his high black hat, flowers in the breast of his black jacket, flowers in his hand. Green boughs are carried by all around him. On they come with their embroidered coats, their long blue cloaks, their light locks and blooming faces, shouting, laughing, singing, and hurrahing!

Now advance four of the party, Eric remaining behind with the rest. These heralds proceed toward Oluf, who stands at the gate of his cottage to receive them.

"Honest father," says the spokesman, "a noble knight and his followers have lost their road in the adjoining forest, and we come to pray for shelter and hospitality."

"How many are you, friends?"

"Three hundred at the least."

"Were your number ten times three hundred," says Oluf, "you should be welcome; and in pledge thereof, drink of this cup." So saying, he hands a bowl of ale to each herald.

Then Eric and his comrades advance joyously toward him with cordial greetings. The bridegroom seeks the bride; the young men each appropriate the hand of a maiden; the father and the musicians lead the way, and the procession starts by the green pathway on the margin of the lake for the neighboring church.

It was a beautiful little temple, standing on an eminence in the midst of a hamlet of red-painted cottages—a moss-grown building with a square belfry, full of swallows' nests. It was the same church which Eric and Ebba had frequented from their childhood. The grave-yard was like a garden with flowers and trees. The poor-box was nailed to a tree beside the gate, and the graves were planted round with currant bushes.

"Swept and clean was the church-yard. Adorned like a leaf-woven arbor  
Stood its old-fashioned gate; and within, upon each cross of iron,  
Hung was a sweet-scented garland, new-twined by the hands of affection."

Here, at the gate, they were met by the old priest in his white robes, who led them to the

altar, before which, as children, they had knelt, and received at his hands their first communion; before which, one summer evening, they had solemnly betrothed themselves to each other; before which, years ago, the little Eric, on his weekly holiday, had knelt in breathless awe, gazing on the painted glories of Jacob and his heavenly vision.

"The benediction of heaven be upon thee, my children," said the good pastor at the conclusion of the ceremony. "The blessing of heaven be upon thee, Eric Sture; for I give thee in marriage this damsel, to be thy wedded wife in all honor, and to share the half of thy bed, thy lock and key, and every third penny which you two may possess, or may inherit, and all the rights which Upland's laws provide, and the holy King Erik gave."

It is over now. Eric and Ebba, united forever, return at the head of the procession; the bridesmaids strew wild flowers and birch twigs in the path; the violins "discourse" gay music; the miners resume their bridal song, and thus they return to the homestead in the forest. And there, on the grassy lawn before the house, a rustic banquet is prepared, as if by magic! Cakes and cheeses, loaves of black bread, dishes of strawberries and cherries, cream and curdled milk, rosy apples, golden pears, all kinds of mountain berries, dried fish, ptarmigan and wild fowl, brandy, nut-brown ale, and sweet white beer in wooden cans—all spread on snowy cloths, with no other table than the green turf, and no canopy but the blue sky and the leafy branches overhead.

The married women, with their husbands, have arrived during the absence of the young men and maidens in church; and it is they who have arranged the wedding-feast.

All hearts were glad, and gladdest were those of the bride and bridegroom. The healths went merrily round, the priest spoke a blessing on the repast, pipes were smoked, tales were told, the women gossiped of their neighbors, and the day was far spent when the dinner was over, and the space cleared for the dance. The priest and Ebba trod together the first measure, a kind of solemn minuet. Then the young men chose their partners, the musicians played a wild and stirring melody, and the lawn was soon covered with dancers, speeding along in twirling couples in the inspiring figures of their national polkas. Eric and Ebba sat apart with Oluf under the linden trees, listening to the music, and observing the revellers. Now, one by one, the young girls brought gifts to the bride, and the youths to the bridegroom.

"Has Eric alone no present for Ebba?" said a pretty Swede, tossing her fair looks, and curling her red lips; "not even a rune-book or a pair of silver ear-rings?"

"Indeed, I have seen none," replied her partner, a sturdy peasant, flushed with dancing and laughter. "If it were me now, and Nina were my little bride——"

He stooped down, and the rest of the sentence was whispered in the ear, and lost amid the curls of the blushing maiden. Now the polka starts off afresh, and they are once more lost in its mazes. But the conversation, short as it was, had been heard by one of the parties to whom it alluded. Eric, confused and abashed, hastily ransacks the pockets of his jacket, as if for some forgotten article. First one is turned out, then another, but in vain; the gift, the wedding-gift is not to be found in either.

"Alas!" he muttered to himself, "I have left it in the pocket of my mining jacket." He casts a wistful look at Ebba, and another at the dancers. A deep sigh and an impatient tapping of his foot betray his unwillingness to go, and his desire to partake in the pleasures of the *fete*. He thinks of the gloomy mine, and contrasts it with the joyous polka. He compares the dark night of the shaft with the rich glories of the red sunset, and is half inclined to remain where he is, and defer his gift till the morrow. But the sneer and the laugh—to be deemed a miserly bridegroom! Bah! a boat lay close under the willows; he could scull himself over the lake and back again, before any one would observe his absence! He rose, as if to seek some friend among the dancers, stole softly away through the trees, threw back one loving glance at the unconscious Ebba, leapt into the light canoe, sped noiselessly and unnoticed along the margin of the lake, and was gone.

Time flew on; the sun went down behind the mountains, and the glorious summer night of Sweden, clear, cloudless, and bright, a soft twilight, "which, like a silver clasp, unites to-day with yesterday," reigned over the festival. Still the dancing went on unabated, nay, with increasing ardor. The dancers thought of no one but themselves and their partners; but Ebba and Oluf missed Eric, and wondered at his absence. Anxious not to disturb the enjoyment of the evening, they for some time refrained from speaking to the rest, and communicated their surprise only to each other; but at length the uneasiness of the bride could no longer be checked, and she went eagerly among the dancers inquiring for her lover. No one had seen him leave; no one could give any reply.

Dismay and a vague terror spread rapidly through the company: the young men dispersed themselves through the wood, and along the banks of the lake, shouting and calling upon his name: the maidens gathered around the weeping Ebba, and proffered vague consolations and encouragement.

All that night he came not, nor the next day, nor the next again. The great beech forest was traversed through and through by parties of his comrades; the boat was missed, and the lake dragged, but nobody was discovered in its depths. Neither in the beech forest, nor the blue lake, nor the dark mine, was Eric Sture to be found, living or dead; and Ebba, in one day bride and widow, was left to grief, to hope, to disappointment, to despair.

When weeks of search had been in vain, the efforts of the peasantry were given over, and the lost bridegroom was, by all save one, in time forgotten.

He never returned again.

\* \* \* \* \*

Fifty years had well nigh passed away, and the tale of Eric Sture and his fatal wedding-day had become a fire-side story told on winter nights by fathers to their children.

Ebba still lived, a bent and wrinkled crone of three score and ten long, bitter years. She dwelt in a ruinous hut beside the lake—a wretched tenement, doorless and windowless, set in a wilderness of weeds and bushes. The miners, pitying her desolation and her traditional sorrows, supplied her regularly with the means of subsistence, and, accordingly, she was rarely seen beyond the narrow confines of her drear domain.

When she did go forth, however, to the world beyond, which sometimes was the case, it was to wander round the brink of the great copper mine, to gaze into its yawning chasm, and to cry, in a voice querulous with age and grief, upon the name of her bridegroom.

Fifty years work strange alterations in the page of human life. In fifty years what new generations spring up to tread out the footsteps of those which have gone before! Young men have grown old and died. Infants, whose lips had not yet learned to shape their mother's name, are grave and care-worn men, and nurse their children's children on their knees. Beauty has become weird and foul. Strength has turned to dotage. The rich man's estate has dwindled to six feet of earth, "and, behold, the twig to which they laid his head, is now become a tree!"

One day, on exploring the depths of a murky chasm, cleft at least a century before, and yet

unworked, they discovered the body of a young man. He was fair and handsome; dressed in holiday attire, and looked as though he had but just fallen asleep. Some withered stalks and leaves were yet fastened to the breast of his jacket, and clinging to the band of his cap. The money about his person was coated with verdigris, but it bore the date of a coinage and the head of a king of fifty years before. No one knew him. He looked as if he had fallen there yesterday; and yet his face was strange to the miners.

Then an old woman came by, who burst into tears when she beheld him, kissing his dead lips and his cold hands, and calling upon "Eric! Eric! her bridegroom and her love!"

And it was so. He lay there in his youth and beauty; fair as when she had last seen him, and felt the warm pressure of his hand. *He* was unchanged; but she stood there withered and old; broken in body and weak in mind; a living type of that slow and wasting sorrow, that "hope deferred which maketh the heart sick."

When the morrow came they buried them together in one grave.

NOTE.—This tale is strictly true in the leading incidents. It was in 1719 that the body was found, after lying there for nearly half a century. Such are the atmospheric properties of this mine, that the corpse of a man was discovered in 1685 which had lain there for two hundred years, and which looked so fresh that he seemed only to be sleeping.

## THE DEBTOR'S CHILD.

### A STRAY LEAF FROM A LAWYER'S PORT-FOLIO.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

It was many years ago when I paid my first visit to Boston. One cold, tempestuous night, I found myself returning to my hotel, late in the evening, from an unavoidable business engagement. As the distance was not great, I had set out on foot; and in order to be more speedy, had struck into one of those narrow cross streets which are so common in the North end. Just as I turned a corner, a figure emerged from the shelter of an old, time-decayed mansion, and extending a wan arm, in a faint, girlish voice, now tremulous with cold, said piteously,

"Please, sir, please—if it's only a penny."

I started; for there was something touchingly sad in the low, plaintive tone of the speaker. She was a delicate, sickly looking child, apparently about eleven years of age, and wrapped in an old and tattered garment, which once had been a cloak. It was with difficulty that she could keep the rags together with her blue, cold arm, as the wind hissed and raved along the narrow street. Her whole look was one of utter destitution. Yet there was none of the squalor of willing poverty in that pale and emaciated young countenance. As I paused, looking at her a moment without speaking, she seemed to think that her prayer was disregarded; for gathering her ragged cloak around her shivering form, with a deep sigh and a look of patient submission, she shrank back under the shelter of the old mansion. But as she turned, the light of a lamp streamed over her face, and I saw that in spite of her efforts tears were rolling down her cheeks. It cut me to the heart.

"My little child," said I, kindly, "where do you live?—you are cold and hungry—what has brought you out on such a night as this?"

"Oh! sir," said she, looking up into my face, and bursting into tears again, "I don't feel the cold,—and I ain't used to beg,—but please, sir, if it's only a penny—for brother's sick, and we've no wood to make a fire, and even little Charley hasn't had any thing to eat to-day."

"Good God!" said I, "you don't mean to say they are starving to death, and in such a city as this."

"Oh! sir, what can we do?—we've got no money, and father's in jail for debt? We haven't

eat since yesterday, and brother, I'm afraid, will never get well, sir, again," and she sobbed as if her heart would break.

"Don't cry," said I, "I'll go and see your brother—and, here," offering her some change,—"run and bring them something to eat, and show me the way."

The girl extended her trembling hand, and clutching the money with the eagerness of famine, hastily murmured her thanks, directed me where to find her home, and then gathering her rags around her, hurried down a neighboring street to execute her commission.

It was a withering night, as I have said. The sky overhead was of a dingy black. The cold, sleety rain whirled slantingly along before the gusts of wind that now rattled among the chimneys, roared about the corners, and went howling down the street. The houses around were black with age, and some seemed ready to tumble headlong. Here and there, indeed, a more tottering structure than its fellow was supported by a beam or two from the adjoining tenement; and in many places, from the absence of shutters, and the shattered condition of the casements, it was evident that the habitation within had long been deserted. As I turned into the by-way a still more desolate sight met my eye. The street was scarcely ten feet wide, narrow, crooked, and utterly destitute of lamps. On either side the tottering frames rose dark into the sky, while a solitary candle glimmered at intervals from some rattling casement. The mouldings of the doors were broken off; the Venitian shutters had mostly rotted from their hinges; and the side walks and door steps were torn up around. The spot looked as if mortal foot had not visited it for years; and I began to think I had mistaken the direction, when I heard a strange step behind me, and turning, beheld the little girl hurriedly following in my rear.

"There, right ahead, sir—turn the next corner," said she, in a voice tremulous with excitement—"this way," and running ahead, she stopped before a low, ruinous door till I came up, when bidding me follow, she entered a narrow passage, groped up a rickety, crooked



staircase, and pushing aside a crazy door, stole noiselessly into the room.

The apartment was low, narrow, and lighted by a solitary candle. The smoky walls were bare, the floor without carpeting, and a bed, a stool, and broken table were the only furniture. There was a chimney-place in one corner, but it looked as if it had not seen a fire for years. Several panes of glass were broken in the casement, in some of which old rags were stuffed, while through others the rain and wind beat, flaring the dim candle, and making the wretched inmates shiver as they drew their rags around them. On the bed lay the wasted form of a little boy, some six or seven years of age, his glassy eye and hollow, hectic cheek, telling a tale of premature decay. A woman cleanly but scantily drest, with a child in her arms, was standing by the bedside of the sufferer, gazing wistfully into his face. Amid all her poverty, it was impossible not to see that she had once been beautiful; and there yet lingered in her care-worn face a soft, almost angelic expression of mingled fortitude and resignation. It was altogether such a face as once seen is rarely forgotten. And then the look of suffering depicted there, telling—oh! how acutely—of the agony of that mother's heart.

Now and then the babe in her arms lifted its little hands and lisped in broken accents for bread, while as she strove to quiet its cries the big tears stole down her pale, wan cheeks, and fell upon the face of the boy.

As we entered she looked up, and noticing a stranger, seemed about to speak, but her little daughter interrupted her.

"Mother, oh! mother," said the girl, running up to her, and unfolding the food she had brought, "see what this good gentleman has given me. Poor little Charley," she continued, addressing the babe, whose outstretched arms betrayed his eagerness to obtain the food, "you needn't cry any longer—brother, couldn't you eat some too?—we shall all have a nice supper, shan't we, dear mother?"

"God in heaven bless you!" murmured the parent, as she turned toward me.

"Hush—not a word, my dear madam," said I, "the wants of your little family and yourself must be attended to."

The eagerness with which the children clutched at the food, showed the extremity to which they had been reduced. The mother apologized for them.

"There, there, my love, don't eat so hungrily," she said, "but it's no wonder since he hasn't had anything to-day."

"Mother!" said the low voice of the sick boy, as he faintly lifted his head from the pillow, "couldn't I have a little water with this"—and he held up a piece of the bread, "I think I could drink some if I had."

"For heaven's sake, my dear madam," I exclaimed, almost affected to tears, as the mother was about rising to go out and obey his request, "remain here, and I will bring the drink—you are yourself sick, you want sustenance too, as you value your children's lives don't expose yourself—I will have some fire made for you, and you shall at least be more comfortable than now."

The mother did not answer. Once or twice she essayed to speak; but her words failed her, and she burst at last into tears.

I performed my errand, and then sought out aid. In an hour a cheery fire was blazing on the hearth; the chinks of the old, tottering, crazy walls, were closed up; the broken panes no longer admitted the wind and rain; such clothing as the late hour permitted me to obtain were provided for the sufferers; and a few little delicacies that are actual necessities in a sick chamber stood upon a table by the poor boy's bedside. Never shall I forget his look of mute thankfulness, as he sucked an orange with his fevered lips; while the overlaid heart of his mother could find no vent except in choking words and tears.

"Oh! mother, if father now was only here," murmured the little fellow, "we might be almost as happy as we used to in our nice house in the country."

"And who is your father, my sweet little fellow?" I asked, "I do not wish to pry into your sorrows wantonly, my dear madam," I continued, addressing the mother, "but if, as I suspect, your husband's difficulties are pecuniary ones, I may, by my profession at least, be of some service to him. Can I aid you in any way?"

"Oh! sir, I never can sufficiently thank you," she sobbed, "but we have not always been as we are now. We were once comfortable, if not rich, and little, little did we think it should ever come to this!" She then told her story.

It was just such a tale as I had often heard, and as happens, alas! to hundreds every year in our larger cities. Her husband had once resided in New York, been a master mechanic of some note, and consequently had lived in a style of corresponding ease and comfort. But he had finally undertaken some speculations, which in the end turned out abortive; he became consequently involved in a train of embarrassments

that grew every year more ruinous; and induced at last to undertake a heavy contract for a range of stores in the hope of redeeming his fortune, he found himself at length, owing to one of those periodical contractions in our money market, unable to prosecute it, and forced to throw up the work under a penalty which would have swept away a fortune ten times as great as his own. In one word—he was reduced to beggary. His character, had he remained in New York, however, would have saved him from being distressed by his creditors, and his numerous acquaintance would have enabled him perhaps in time to re-establish himself; but possessed of a proud and sensitive heart, he could not endure to live among his friends without an equality of fortune, and preferred, like many a one before and since, to drain the cup of poverty to its dregs among strangers. He removed to Boston, and for awhile lived at least without want. But his ill fate finally found him out even there. An old creditor had pressed him for payment, and finally levied an execution on his house a month or two since. Though he was thus broken up he did not as yet despair. He removed to a meaner house, continuing his exertions as a common journeyman. But even here his oppressor found him out, and a second time sold out his little all. To crown all, winter set in, and Spencer found himself without employment. His creditor, too, arrested him, and threw him into prison for debt. His destiny seemed about to be accomplished, for poor, friendless, unknown, and in a strange city, to whom should he apply for aid? His heart sickened within him, the more so when he thought of his meek wife and suffering little ones. And she—angel that she was! but are not all women angels at such times?—how did she bear up against her fate? Day by day she stood at the prison gates long before they were opened, and never left them till the regulations forced her to depart, performing a thousand little kindnesses for her husband, striving by her cheerfulness to soothe his troubled spirit, and endeavoring with her needle to obtain a scanty and uncertain subsistence.

As the winter set in the little boy fell sick; he could no longer come to the prison—and the wife and mother now had to share her time between him and her husband. But when he grew worse, she was not only forced to forego visiting the prison, but found herself unable to earn more than half the pittance she did formerly—and when at last her employer, angry that a garment was not finished in time, refused to employ her further, her wild, agonising decla-

ration that the fear her boy was dying had caused the failure, served only to invoke the rage of the hard-hearted man. Little do we know of the world's obduracy until we have mingled with it. Her sole support thus cut off she almost despaired of human help. In vain she applied everywhere for work—the demand for it was already greater than could be supplied. Poverty, cold, and starvation was before her, but she could have borne it all, had it not been for her little ones. One by one, therefore, their few things had been disposed of in the vain hope that relief from some quarter would arrive. As a last hope her little girl had that evening tried in vain to borrow a mite, and failing in that was driven to beg or die.

It was with a sad heart I left the abode of poverty. I at once determined, if possible, to restore the husband to his family.

It is not necessary to detain the reader with a recapitulation of what I did to effect this purpose. Suffice it to say, I procured the liberation of the father on the following day.

I judged it advisable, however, to precede him home, in order to prepare his family. On my way I called on the physician to inquire after the sick boy. The doctor shook his head, and declared the child to be in the last stage of his disorder. At my urgent request he got into the carriage with me.

Never shall I forget the sight that presented itself when I announced that the father would soon be free. Tears, sobs, and words of gratitude were poured forth, until it grew painful to me. The worthy physician, seeing my embarrassment, took the sick boy's hand in his, and with those mild, soothing tones, so welcome to a sufferer—for they sound like those of a friend—he asked,

"And how do you feel to-night, my little fellow?"

"Better, sir, thank you," said the boy, in a voice so faint that it strangely belied his words. Poor child, he felt indeed stronger, but he little knew it was only the last revival of worn-out nature. The sands were already nearly run out; the cistern was well nigh broken at the fountain; a little while longer and his pure spirit would be at rest. Every one in the room seemed conscious of this, for they had all gathered around his bed, and stood gazing on his wasted form, with sad and tearful eyes. And well might it melt the heart to look on that pallid young face.

After a little while one of the sudden, transitory doses of sickness came upon him, and for awhile, with the physician still holding his pulse, he seemed to sleep. The mother sat on the

other side of the bed, holding a cloth with which she had been bathing his brow, and every now and then turning anxiously to the door, or endeavoring to hide the tears that, one by one, swelled from her eyes, and stole heavily down her cheek. The sister stood at the foot of the bed, looking mournfully at her brother, but she did not know his danger. And the little child, held in a neighbor's arm, gazed wistfully from one to the other, as if to inquire what it all meant. Suddenly the lad started half up in bed, gazing a minute wildly around. His words at first were incoherent, his cheeks crimson, his gestures eager, his eyes glassy and unsettled.

"George, my love, George," sobbed the mother, "don't you know me? It is I that speaks. George, my dear boy—oh, God!" she continued, lifting her eyes to heaven with a look of unutterable agony, "my boy is dying!"

The child seemed to know her voice; it won upon him amid all his delirium; he looked a moment inquiringly into her face, and then extending his thin, bare hand to her, while a smile shot, like dying sunlight across his countenance, he murmured,

"Mother, is it you?—Oh! I thought I saw such strange faces—it must have been a dream—there were stars, and lovely rivers, and bright angels there beckoning me. Mother, could it have been heaven?"

"Oh! my child, don't talk so," was all the heart-broken parent could sob.

"Mother," said the little fellow after a pause, "I'm so tired—let me lay my head on your bosom, as I used to when I was a baby like Charley—there, that is it—kiss me, mother—but where is father?—didn't some one say he was coming—why, oh! why don't he come?"

Not a voice could answer. We were all in tears, even the old physician, used as he was to such scenes.

"Oh! sister, mother, don't cry," said the little fellow touchingly, "you've often told me, mother, that heaven is a happy place, where bright angels sing all day long, and there is no cold or sickness or poverty. You shouldn't cry, if I'm going there—and by-and-bye, you'll all come too, won't you? Father, too, will be there—oh! I wish I could see him, if it's only for one kiss before I die—why, why don't he come?"

"Would—God—my dear—boy," sobbed the mother, chokingly, "he could—come—before—" she would have gone on, but alas! her overcharged heart would not let her speak.

"Oh! mother!" said the little fellow, looking up, and speaking, as I have often noticed in the dying, above his years; while his eyes gleamed

with a strange and fitful fire, "do you remember how happy we all used to be years ago, when we had that nice house in the country in summer, and father would take us such pretty walks, and we'd pluck such gay flowers, and at night you would hear us say our prayers, and sing sweet songs to lullaby sister and me, and laugh so at our play—you don't laugh any more, mother—I wonder if heaven can be as happy as that—I shall see sister Ellen there, shan't I, mother?—and oh! when I die, bury me in the country, in some spot like that where she was—and——"

But here—as his thoughts, in the wanderings of expiring intellect reverted to his absent father—his tone saddened, and instead of finishing his sentence, he murmured sadly, looking anxiously toward the door, "father, dear father, do come!" and then sank exhausted upon his mother's bosom.

For a moment we thought all was over. His eyes were closed, his arms rigid, his cheek unnaturally pale, and he scarcely seemed to breathe. All at once he opened his eyes, and looking up earnestly said,

"Hark!—he is coming," and instantly we heard a tread in the entry, the door flew open, and the long-looked-for father rushed into the room.

"My boy—my boy," was all he could gasp, rushing wildly to the bedside.

But he staggered back, as his eye took in the condition of the sufferer, and cried, "oh! my God, they have murdered you!" his heart-broken voice full of the bitterest agony.

"Hush, father—I am happy now," said the boy, with difficulty, "mother—sister—brother—kiss me—there, now—we shall meet in heaven—I hear the golden harps sounding."

"My child—my dear, angel Charley," sobbed the strong man, his frame shaking as in an ague fit.

"How cold—it—is," murmured the boy, "don't—don't leave me. It's—all dark. Your—hand—mo-o-ther," and with a gentle quiver of the face, he was dead.

For a moment a silence, deep and reverential, fell upon the room, while all gazed eagerly upon the pallid face, to see if the little fellow was indeed gone "where the weary are at rest." The awful hush was at length broken by the old physician, as he lifted his eye to heaven, and said devoutly,

"The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord!"

"Amen!" was all I could answer: but the poor father, who had stood like stone, gazing

upon his boy, now shivered in every limb, and casting himself frantically on the bed, while the stout frame shook under his convulsive twitches, sobbed aloud, and in the language of the Scripture, "would not be comforted." Even the tender words of his wife, who, overawed by his fearful emotion, seemed to lose all consciousness of her own bereavement, and think only of relieving his agony, were of no avail. Oh! how terrible is the strong man's grief. What to that father now, was liberty! His boy, his doted boy, was lifeless beside him, murdered, for want of that aid, which a few dollars would have secured. Can words picture the agony of such a moment?

The dear little fellow was buried, and buried

too as he had begged, where the birds might build above him.

What remains to be told? The father, through the old physician's influence, obtained a clerkship in a commercial house, rose gradually from station to station, and in little more than five years was living in comfort and ease.

But neither he, nor the mother, ever forgot their martyred boy. "To lose a child is always terrible," said he to me, years after, "but to lose one, who, but for a cruel law, might still have been living—oh! that is agony."

I pressed his hand, with tears in my eyes, and silently thanked God that imprisonment for debt was now abolished, almost everywhere in the United States.

## THE ORPHANS FROM THE ALMS-HOUSE.

BY MRS. ANN. S. STEPHENS.

[Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1854, by Edward Stephens, in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.]

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 205.

## CHAPTER XV.

THERE was, at the time of our story, a public house, or tavern, about five minutes walk up the street from uncle Nathan's house. To this tavern the young men betook themselves, while the girls were partaking of aunt Hannab's hospitality; and two or three of the upper rooms were full of commotion created by the change which each deemed necessary to his apparel, before he appeared in dancing trim before the ladies. Flashy vests were taken from overcoat pockets. The dickies, snugly curled under the lining of a fur cap or narrow-brimmed hat, came forth to be arranged under neck-ties of gay hues and flowing dimensions. Here and there, one more exquisite than his neighbor, exchanged his mixed socks and cowhide boots for white yarn stockings and calf-skin pumps; but this was a mark of gentility that few ventured on, and that was assumed with a stealthy sort of air and in a dark corner, as if the owners of so much refinement were not quite certain of the way in which the democratic majority might receive it.

Never were two small mirrors brought into more general requisition than those hanging upon the walls of those two chambers. It was like a panorama of human faces passing over them. First a collar all awry was set right with a jerk; then the plaits of a false bosom were smoothed down; next the tie of a flowing silk cravat was settled. While, in other parts of the room, there was a stealthy display of private rolls of pomatum, and a sharp brushing of hair sometimes refractory to anything but the fingers.

Then followed a deal of bustle and confusion, half a dozen young fellows crowded at once to the mirror in hot haste to catch a last glimpse. Red bandanna handkerchiefs fluttered out of a dozen pockets and back again, mysteriously leaving a corner visible. Then there was a general movement toward the door, and the crowd descended, each youth treading lighter by far than when he went up, and moving forward with the air of a man expected to change his manners somewhat with his garments.

While all this was going on above stairs, there

sat in the bar-room below a fair young man, travel-soiled and looking weary, like an over-taxed child. He was very slender, and with a sort of lily paleness on his bent forehead, that fatigue or sorrow had lent to its natural delicacy.

His garments were old and threadbare. Dust from the highway had settled upon them; and the crown of his hat, which lay on the floor beside him, had taken a reddish tinge from the same source.

He sat in a remote corner of the room, upon a buffalo skin that had been flung over a wooden bench, where travellers sometimes cast themselves down for temporary rest. His hands were clasped over the smaller end of a violin-case that stood upright before him, and his forehead fell wearily upon them.

"Look there," said one of the young men, turning to his companions, who were descending the stairs, "don't that look tremendously like a fiddle?"

"A fiddle! a fiddle!" ran from lip to lip, till the sound ended in a shout up stairs, "Let us see where it is! Where did it come from?"

This clamor aroused the young man, who lifted his face from the violin-case and turned a pair of full blue eyes, misty from fatigue or some other cause, upon the group.

The young men paused and looked at each other. There was something so strangely beautiful about that young face that it impressed them with something like awe.

Still the youth gazed upon them with an unmoved look, like one who listened rather than saw with his eyes. Meanwhile a smile stole over his lips, so child-like and sweet that it made the young men still more reluctant to approach him. He seemed so far removed from their nature, with that smile, and the lamplight glimmering through the thick waves of his golden brown hair.

"I wonder if he plays on it himself," said one of the young men in a whisper.

"Did any one speak of me?" said the stranger, in a voice so rich and sweet that there seemed no need of other music to him.

"Well, yes," answered the foremost youth, advancing toward him. "We've got a husking frolic on hand, and are all ready for dancing; but there isn't a fiddle within ten miles, nor any one to play it if there was. We might have got along with the girls singing well enough, I suppose, but the sight of this fiddle-case has set us all agoing for a little music."

"Oh," said the youth, with a smile, "it's my violin you wish to have; but I am very tired; for I've travelled all day over the mountains on foot."

"It's of no use asking you to play for us then, I suppose?" said the young farmer, in a disappointed tone.

The youth shook his head, but very gently, as one who refuses against his will; and this gave his petitioner a gleam of hope.

"Wouldn't a good supper, and a cup of cider that'll make your palate tingle, set you up again?" he pleaded. "There's a hull hive of purty gals over at uncle Nat's, that would jump right out of their skins at the first sound of that fiddle. If you only could now."

"Give me a crust of bread and a cup of drink, and I will try and please you. I think it is, perhaps, as much the want of food as weariness that has taken away my strength."

The young men looked at each other. "Want of food," said one of them; "why didn't you find taverns on the way?"

"Yes," answered the stranger, sadly, "but I had no money; and it is not every one who wants my music, as you do."

The group of youngsters drew together, and a whispered conversation commenced, which was followed by the clink of silver, as each one dropped a two shilling piece into the hat of the young man, who had been most active in the negotiation.

"Here," said the youth, holding forth the money, "an even exchange is no robbery. Set the old fiddle to work, and here is enough dimes to last you a week."

The stranger blushed crimson, and the white lids drooped over his eyes, as if something had been said to wound him.

"No," he said, with a quivering voice, "my poor music is not worth selling yet. Besides my journey must end not far from this, or I have travelled slowly. Give me a supper and some clean water for my face and hands, that is all I ask."

"Supper of course we will. Come with us up to uncle Nat's. As for water, why there is a trough full at his back door, that you may bathe your head in if you like; and as for cider, we'll

just try that before you say anything about it."

The stranger arose and took up his violin; then lifting his large eyes, that seemed flooded with mist, he said almost mournfully,

"Will some one give me his hand? We are going to a strange place, and I am blind."

The young men became at once silent and respectful with these words, for there was something of reverence in their sympathy with a being at once so helpless and so full of gentle dignity.

"Let me carry the violin," said one, while another stout, brave fellow clasped the slender hand of the blind stranger in his own broad palm, and led him carefully forth, hushing even the cheery tones of his voice as he directed the youth where to plant his feet.

Thus subdued from hilarity to kindness, the group of young men conducted their new friend to the old homestead and into the outer room, where the table was newly spread, with Salina hovering over it, with a huge brown cider pitcher in her hand, from which she began to fill the glasses when the crowd of guests rushed in.

Aunt Hannah, having performed her duty among her female guests, was busy in the milk room, cutting up pies and dividing pound-cake into sections, and slicing up cards of gingerbread, while uncle Nat presided diligently at the cider-cask.

Thus it happened that the blind violinist was almost overlooked in the crowd, for he sat down in a corner of the room, where his new friend brought him an abundance of dainties from the table, while Salina was too busy even for a glance that way.

"How do you feel now? Stronger, I know by your mouth, there's color in the lips now," said the young man, who had taken a leading interest in the stranger from the first.

"Oh! yes, I am much stronger," answered the youth, with one of the sweetest smiles that ever beamed on a human face. "A little fresh water now, and you shall see if I haven't music enough in the old violin to pay you for all this."

"Come this way. The water-trough is out by the back porch."

The youth took up his violin, saying very gently that he never left that behind him, and following the lead of his friend's hand, glided from the room.

After bathing his hands and face, leaving them pure and white as those of a girl, he went back to the porch, and seating himself in uncle Nat's armed-chair, drew forth his violin and began to tune it.

Uncle Nat was just returning the spigot from his cider barrel, after having filled the brown pitcher once more to the brim; but at the first sound of the violin, an instrument he had not heard for years, the spigot dropped to the floor, and out rushed the cider in a quick amber stream, overflowing the pitcher, dashing down to the floor, and rushing off in a tiny river down the sloping edge of the porch, where you could hear it creeping in a rich current through the plantain leaves, while there stood uncle Nat, quite oblivious of the waste, listening like a great school boy to the violin.

An exclamation from Salina, as she came forth and seized the pitcher, brought the good old man to his senses. Clapping his fat hand over the aperture, he drove the cider back in its cask, and looked right and left over his shoulder for the spigot, avoiding the scornful eyes of that exemplary female who stood still like an antiquated Hebe defying an overgrown Ganymede, with the pitcher between her hands, over which the surplus moisture went dripping.

"There," exclaimed the strong-minded damsel, pointing toward the spigot with her foot, "there's at least two gallons of the best cider in Greene county gone to nothing. What do you think aunt Hannah will do for apple sarce, if you go on this way, making regular mill-dams out of her sweet cider?"

"Maybe we'd better say nothing about it," answered uncle Nat, making futile efforts to restrain the cider with one hand and reach the spigot with the other, "dear me, I can't reach it. Now, dear Miss Salina, if you only would."

Dear, dear Miss Salina! The strong-minded one turned at the words, her face firing up till it revealed her tresses. She set down her pitcher, shook the drops from her fingers, and seizing the important bit of pine presented it to uncle Nathan.

All this time the young stranger had paused in tuning his violin, but when uncle Nat drew a deep breath, after repairing the mischief he had done, out came a gush of music that made him start again, and threw the strong-minded woman into a fit of excitement, quite startling. She seized uncle Nat's moist hand and unconsciously—it must have been unconsciously—pressed it in her wiry fingers.

"Music! Did you ever hear such music, uncle Nathan? It's enough to set one off a dancing."

"Wal, why not?" answered uncle Nathan.

"Yes, why not?" replied the strong-minded one, "if the other young people dance, why shouldn't we?"

"Of course," said uncle Nat, wiping his hands

on the roller towel. "Why not? I shouldn't wonder if we astonish these youngsters."

"And aunt Hannah, too," chimed in Salina. "Oh, I'd forgot her," said uncle Nat, looking wistfully toward the milk-room door, "I'm afraid it won't do, she'll think—but here they come, like a swarm of blackbirds!"

True enough, the first full notes of the violin had drawn the crowd of girls from the chamber overhead, and down they came, laughing and racing through the kitchen, perfectly wild with delight.

"Uncle Nat, dear, dear, uncle Nat, is it really a violin? Will aunt Hannah let us dance to any thing but singing?" cried a dozen voices; and uncle Nathan was at once surrounded by a rainbow of streaming ribbons and floating ringlets, while a host of merry eyes flashed their delight upon him.

"I don't know—I can't take it on myself to say," cried uncle Nathan, quite beside himself, "you must ask some one else. I haven't any objection in life—"

"Nor I," said Salina, "and that's two agin one, if Miss Hannah *does* stand out. Come, I'll go with you. We'll say that I, and all the other young girls, have just made up our mouths to dance after a fiddle, and we mean to, that's all."

"Stop, stop a minute," exclaimed uncle Nathan, spreading his hands, "maybe you'd better say nothing about it, but just go into the barn and begin. If sister Hannah has got a conscience agin dancing to a fiddle, you know, it ain't worth while to wake it up; but there's more ways of getting into a lot than by taking down the bars. Jest climb the fence, that's all."

How uncle Nathan ever came to give this worldly piece of advice is still a mystery. Some insinuated that the cider had sent its sparkles to his brain, and others thought the music had aroused some sleeping mischief there. Perhaps it was both. Perhaps too the bright eyes and ripe laughter around him had something to do with the matter. At any rate the advice was too pleasant not to be taken. A telegraphic signal brought the young men from the out room, and off the company fluttered in pairs toward the barn, making the starlight melodious with their laughter.

## CHAPTER XVI.

In their haste the young people had left the blind youth seated in the chair, in a dark end of the porch.

"Come," said uncle Nat, in his kindly fashion, "you and I will follow them."

"Give me your hand," said the youth, rising, "I cannot see."

"What, blind?" said the old man, sorrowfully, "blind, and so young! It's hard!"

He paused. A strange thrill shot over him, as the hand of the youth touched his. "Come," he added, tenderly, leading the stranger on, "I have eyes for us both."

The slender hand trembled in his clasp; the agitation was mutual; for through that delicately organized frame ran a spark of joy that warmed him to the heart. They walked on together in silence, both thrilled with a strange sensation of pleasure, and drawn, as it were, by invisible influences toward each other.

"I'm afraid," said the blind youth, "I'm afraid my music will disappoint them. I know hardly any but sacred or sad airs."

His voice made all the blood in uncle Nathan's veins start again; it was music in itself, such music as he had spoken of as most natural to him, sad and ineffably sweet.

"Oh," answered uncle Nathan, drawing a deep, pleasant breath, "you must have a dancing tone or so, Yankee Doodle, Money Musk, and Money in both Jackets as like as not."

"Yankee Doodle, oh, yes, it was the first air I ever learned, how my poor father loved it—as for the rest, well, we shall see."

Uncle Nathan's chair had been placed near the door as it happened, away from the light which fell warmest in the centre of the barn. Thus, during the whole evening, the young musician had been constantly surrounded by shadows that left his features mysteriously undefined. Still uncle Nathan hovered near him, his warm heart yearned to see itself near the youth. When he drew forth his bow, and, without a prelude, dashed into Yankee Doodle, uncle Nat sunk to a bundle of corn-stalks, covered his face with both hands, and absolutely shivered under the floods of tenderness let into his soul with the music.

But no one heeded the old man, why should they? Couple after couple rushed up to the centre of the barn, gaily disputing for the place beneath the rustic chandelier, while here and there a young fellow, more eager than the rest, broke into a double shuffle or out a subdued pigeon wing as an impromptu while the set was forming.

It was no wonder. The violin was absolutely showering down music. A thousand strings seemed to find voice beneath those slender fingers. It set the young people off like birds in a thicket, down the outside, up, down the middle, swinging corners, oh, it is impossible for a pen

to keep up with them. There they go, whirling, smiling, dancing higher and faster, flying with the music till they paused flushed and panting at the bottom of the set. Even now they cannot be still, but give each other a superfluous twirl, or go on in a promiscuous way, doing over again the dance in fragments till their turn comes once more.

Somehow Yankee Doodle waved off into various other airs quite unknown to the dancers, and all swelling free and with a bold sweep of sound, as if the musician improvised as much in his music as the company certainly did in their dancing. But it was the more exhilarating for that, and never did enjoyment run higher or mirth gush out more cheerily.

Mary Fuller had made her way quietly into the barn, and seating herself by uncle Nathan, watched the bright revel as it went on, filled with a pleasant sort of wonder that anything could be so happy as these gay revellers seemed. Unlike most persons, she had no feeling of envy or bitterness, against those who enjoyed so much the pleasures of which she was deprived. Once or twice she was asked to dance, but shrunk sensitively from the very proposition; while Salina stood erect by uncle Nathan, with her arms folded and her head on one side, filled with burning indignation against mankind in general, and dear old uncle Nathan in particular, because she was left a solitary wall-flower planted in the very calf-skin shoes that she had expected to exhibit in.

There was a change in the music. The strings trembled and thrilled a moment, then out came a wild gush of melody that made the very dancers pause and hold their breath to listen.

Mary Fuller started to her feet one moment. The color left her lips, and then back it came, firing her face with scarlet to the brows.

"Uncle Nat, uncle Nat," she said, seizing him by the arm, "that music!—I've heard it before—listen—listen!"

She sat down trembling from head to foot, but her grey eyes flashed joy from beneath their drooping lids, and her mouth grew tremulous with feeling. When the air was finished, for it died off in a few plaintive notes, as if the violinist had entirely forgotten the dancers, Mary arose and crept softly toward the musician, till she could obtain a view of his face. By the stray candles that wavered to and fro among the evergreens, she could dimly see the white outline of those pure features and the mysterious beauty of those sightless eyes.

Now her countenance, hitherto varying and anxious, settled into a warm flush of joy; she



drew close to the musician; and resting one hand on the back of his chair, placed the other softly on his arm.

"Joseph—Joseph Wilson," she said, in a voice that scarcely rose above a whisper. "Is it you, Joseph Wilson?"

He turned his eyes toward her, fondly as if they could read all the gladness in her face.

"I know the touch of your hand, Mary Fuller; and your voice is full of the old music. Where am I? How does it happen that you and I meet here?"

"I live here—I have friends, oh! such kind friends. And you, Joseph—how came you here? Where is your father—that dear, good father? Oh! I remember him so well."

"My father," said the blind youth, bowing his head, with a look of touching sorrow, "my father is dead, and I am alone in the world, with nothing but this!"

He touched his violin with a mournful smile, and laid his cheek caressingly against it.

"Then you and I are both orphans." But she added more cheerfully, "we are not alone, you have your music, and I have my, my—oh, I have many things."

"Music, music!" called out the dancers, impatiently, from the floor.

Mary drew back.

"Don't leave me," said the youth, anxiously.

"Come listen to my old friend here, and we will talk between the dances."

"Leave you?" replied the young girl, "oh, you do not know; you cannot guess how happy I am to see you again."

"And I," answered the youth, smiling softly, "I can feel how beautiful everything is around me when you are near. Did you know how my father loved you, and how he grieved over it when you left us?"

"Did he?" answered Mary, with a low sob, "how often I thought of you and him; but he must have known where we went; and how impossible it was for us to come back after poor Isabel's mother died."

"We heard that you had been taken from the Alms-House; but no one would tell us where you went, or with whom: it was against the rules, they said, I never expected to see either of you again."

"Music, music," clamored the dancers once more. The young man took up his bow with a sigh.

"Listen, listen," he said, softly, drawing it across the strings. "Do you remember the music we had that night? I will give it to you again."

He began to play, and while others were dancing merrily, she listened till her young heart filled and her eyes were crowded full of tears. She remembered a small room high up in a city dwelling. The furniture was scant but neat and so daintily arranged. The bright cooking-stove, the bird-cage, the little round work-stand, above all the handsome, cheerful woman, with her household love and genial benevolence, Isabel Chester's mother—how vividly the sight of that young minstrel brought all this to her memory.

The music was ringing cheerily through the barn, which trembled to the buoyant movements of the dancers, till the garlands shook upon the walls, and all the lights seemed to twinkle and reel with sympathetic motion. But the face of the violinist grew sad in its expression, and as Mary Fuller gazed at it through her tears, her heart trembled within her, though a gleam of most exquisite pleasure lay at the bottom, pleasure so rare that its very newness made her tremble.

"Don't you dance, Mary?" inquired the musician, speaking to her, but without a break in his music.

"Dance!" she answered, looking down at her stunted figure with a pang, "no, I never have danced in my life."

"Oh! if you could dance now, and I had eyes to witness it—how beautiful you must be, Mary Fuller—my heart used to ache for eyes to see you with."

Mary shrunk back blushing and frightened; it seemed as if her old friend could see and was mocking her.

"No, no," she stammered, "I am not beautiful; but, but—"

She could not go on: it seemed cruel to destroy his delusion. Poor thing! silence seemed a pride to her gentle heart, but she had no courage to tell Joseph Wilson how little of beauty she possessed.

The young musician shook his head, and the light of a stray candle rippled through his hair like gold: there was something angelic in the aspect of his unbelief as he murmured amid the music,

"Oh! but she must be beautiful. Never on earth have I heard a voice so full of melody. Sweet spring sounds and the breath of flowers seem floating in it. Oh! she must be beautiful, this dear child."

Then he began to smile again; richer sounds gushed from beneath his fingers; the dancers fell into a ring; the steps grew lighter. The ring of life flashed round beneath the lights, whirling

its way amid floods of laughter, like a water-wheel casting off rainbows and foam to the sunshine. The ring broke up; all its sunny links broke into pairs; balancing; smiling, and gliding away to the half-hushed music: all glad to rest, but eager to begin again. That moment the double doors were softly pushed open, and a group of visitors entered the barn, almost unnoticed at first, but that soon cast a restraint upon all this hilarity.

It was our friend the little constable, followed by a young man, evidently from the city, and a fair girl so beautiful that the whole company paused to look at her.

She was dressed very plainly, and her air was remarkable only for its simple quietness, though her large brown eyes turned with a look of eager haste from form to form, as if she were searching for some one.

Mary Fuller, who had been standing by the violinist, very thoughtful and with her eyes dim with heart mist, saw the group come in. She drew her hands across her eyes to clear their sight, clasped them with an exclamation of joy, and moving down through the shadows stood close to the young stranger.

"Isabel, Isabel!" broke from her eager lips.

Isabel Chester turned. Her face was radiant. She opened her arms, and with a sob of delight, received Mary to her bosom.

"Mary, dear, dear, little Mary Fuller—how glad I am. You love me yet, I know. She never would forget me, any more than I forgot her. Come talk to me, I was determined to see you before I slept; and so persuaded James, Mr. Farnham, I mean—oh! I forgot you never met before—but he knows all about you, Mary. Here, James, isn't she a dear creature?"

Isabel drew Mary's face from her bosom, and stood with one arm around her as she said this.

Young Farnham reached forth his hand, but before he could speak, Isabel went on.

"She has grown a little too; reaches to my shoulder and rather more; her eyes, oh! I knew her eyes would be beautiful; and, and there is something about her that I didn't expect. James, why don't you tell Mary Fuller that she's almost handsome? There now, isn't that look something better than beauty? Oh! Mary Fuller, how glad I am to see you."

Tears were flashing, like diamonds, down the peachy bloom of Isabel's cheek; for Mary had crept to her bosom again, and she felt the shiver of delight that shook the young creature from head to foot. Her own heart leaped back to its old memories, and swelled against the clinging form of her friend.

"That's right, that's just about as it ought to be," exclaimed Salina, coming forward triumphantly, for her honest heart rose to meet the scene, "I knew she'd be here afore bed time, if New York finery and foreign countries hadn't completely upset her. Isabel Chester, you're a fast rate gal, and I say it. Mr. Farnham she's a credit to human nature. You may reckon on that, now I tell you. Says I to myself, says I, 'that are gal is sure to come down to the old homestead afore bed time, or I loose my guess,' wasn't I right?"

"You always think too well of me," said Isabel, laughing through her tears. "Come, Mary, let me hear your voice. You haven't spoken a word yet."

"Oh! I love you so much, Isabel; I'm so happy, Isabel."

Isabel bent down and kissed the happy face upon her bosom. As she lifted her face again her eyes fell upon the blind youth, who guided by voices that he recognized, had moved toward them unnoticed.

"Who, who is this, Mary Fuller? I remember the face. No, no, James, it must be one of Guido's heads, that has bewildered me. Surely I never saw anything living like that before: It is Guido's Michael in repose. Look up, Mary, and tell me who this young man is."

Isabel spoke in a low voice, but regarding the blind youth with a look of mingled admiration and surprise, while the tears still sparkled on her cheeks.

Mary looked up; her eyes kindled; and she smiled proudly through her tears.

"That, Isabel? Can't you remember something that you have seen before in his face?"

"I don't know. The memory of a picture I saw at Rome blinds me. Who is it, say?"

"Hush, Isabel; you will grow sad when I tell you. That night when you and I watched——"

"Yes," answered Isabel, drooping her head, "I shall never forget that night."

"Do you remember who was with us, Isabel?"

"That angel boy"

"Yes, Isabel. It is Joseph."

"And still blind?"

"Yes," said Mary, with a deep breath, "he will never see your beauty, nor my——"

"But he can feel your goodness, darling. Come, let us speak to him."

With her arm still flung caressingly over Mary's shoulder, Isabel Chester moved toward the blind youth; but she was checked by the capacious person of uncle Nat, who came between her and her object with a look of strange interest on his face. His hands were clasped,

and you could see the plump fingers working nervously around each other; while his eyes filled and shone with anxious tenderness. At length, after a long gaze, his chest swelled like the heave of an ocean wave; his hands fell apart; and he murmured softly as if speaking only to himself,

"It is little Anna's boy!"

"Who speaks my mother's name?" inquired the youth, in his low, gentle way, "surely some one is near that I ought to love."

"Ought to love?" cried uncle Nat, seising the hand which had been waved softly to and fro, as if groping for some object that its owner could not see. "Ought to love? Why it would be agin natur and the Lord's Providence, if you didn't love the old man that——"

Uncle Nat checked himself; a crowd had gathered around him; but the feelings he was constrained to suppress broke forth in two large tears that rolled down his broad cheeks.

"Nephew," he sobbed, shaking the hand that he still grasped, "you're welcome to the old homestead! Neighbors," he added, with dignity, "suppose you make out the evening with blind-man's buff, or whose got the button? This is my own nephew, that I haven't seen since he was a baby. You won't expect him to play any more to-night; he's tired out; and I——"

The old man's lips began to tremble, and tears came again into his eyes, and coursed rapidly after those that had fallen. He shook his head; tried to go on without success; and taking Joseph by the hand led him toward the door.

"Stop, jest one minute now, till I've done a little chance of business," cried the constable, creeping out from a corner of the barn, where the husked ears had been piled, and planting himself, like a pert exclamation point, before

the old man, "I've got to make a levy on this corn heap," he said, "the oxen out yonder, and sundry other goods and chattels about the old homestead. I want to du everything fair and above board, so jest wait to see the law executed."

Uncle Nathan paused, half wondering, half shocked at the man's words.

"What! the corn, that my kind neighbors have just husked? the oxen I brought up from steers? who has a right to take them?"

"There's the writ. All correct you'll find. Madam Farnham claims a right to her own, and I'm here to see that she gets it."

"Madam Farnham, my mother!" cried young Farnham, indignantly, "knaave, you slander my name."

"You'll find it there," cried the little constable, dashing the back of his dirty hand against the open writ. "Your mother, if she is your mother, authorized me to buy up all claims agin uncle Nat here and aunt Hannah, six months ago; and I've done it. Five hundred and ten dollars with costs."

"Come with me!" answered the young man, sternly. "Isabel, go to the house with Salina. I will return."

He took the constable by the arm and led him out, followed by hoots and cheers from the young farmers.

Uncle Nathan stood for a moment, dumb with amazement; then he drew a deep breath and grasped his nephew's hand more firmly.

"It seems as if the old homestead was falling around us," he said, "but so long as a shingle is left, it shall shelter my sister Anna's son."

And he led the blind youth forth into the sunlight.

(TO BE CONCLUDED.)

## KINDRED HEARTS.

BY ELLEN LOUISE CHANDLER.

"Oh, ask not, hope thou not too much  
Of sympathy below,  
Few are the hearts whence one same touch  
Bids the sweet fountain flow.  
Few, and by still conflicting pow'rs  
Forbidden here to meet—  
Such ties would make this life of ours  
Too fair for aught so fleet!"—MRS. HEMANS.

ALONE, alone! Like Coleridge's ancient Mariner, I am drifting alone on the wide, wide sea of life. In the distance lie floating pleasure-islands, beautiful as the summer-house of Kubla-Kahn, and yet mysterious and unexplored as the sepulchres of our last hopes.

Life-barques, full-freighted, dash gaily by me, and far away on the lone lee-shore, with its dull, grey line of sea and sky, drift lonely, goblin wrecks—torn, and vast, and homeless.

Sea-birds shriek there, and the sun pauses over the spot, and then looks down on me like an avenging spirit. Oh, why, why am I here? Why do the pleasure-islands float farther and farther away, and the wrecks loom up, clear and ghastly, in the scorching glare of the noontide sun?

Why, but that I have fought with good and conquered—have wrecked my own happiness, and the fragments floating here and there, seem to my imagination like the dismantled hulks of a thousand vessels!

I am indeed *alone*. There are fair forms around me, but my heart—life is desolate. In the midst of a gay world my soul walks lonely on its own track through an enchanted region; sometimes over fair, peaceful fields smiling with sunshine, but oftener through gloomy forests, where stagnant waters lie green and dark.

But everywhere it is *alone*. Into this enchanted life no human eye can look, except when sometimes one stands on the shore, and catches a faint glimpse from the border-land of the affections, even as when a traveller having crossed some rapid, surging stream, over a dizzy, plank bridge, pauses on the brink, and looking backward catches faint glimpses of pearls and coral lying far below, with the waves boiling over them!

And yet, *need* I feel so very desolate? There are those who *love* me! Those who have stood beside me, and laid soft hands on my head when

my eyes were dim and my brow aching! Those who have prayed for me at dawning and dew-fall, and guarded my life-path from thorns and darkness.

Oh! Orna, Orna, good, gentle Orna! Blessings on the light of thy brown eyes. It is not *thy* fault if thy womanish heart cannot mate with *my* proud spirit! Very good hast thou been to me; with thy noiseless foot-path by my bedside, thy soft hand upon my thrilling brow.

My wife—my beloved! And yet I know not why with thy form and thy face by my side, *another* rises out of her grave to haunt me. Forgive me, oh, gentle, and living loved, that I cannot forget the proud, cold dead! I do not know in what Nora Ivenel's wondrous loveliness consisted.

To me *only* was she beautiful. Her large, black eyes were lit with that pale, cold fire which the German sight-seers represent as illumining the eyes of the Vampires. Her heart was proud, defiant, haughty. Her hand chilled me as it lay in mine; her voice sounded to my ear like tones out of grave-yards, and yet she suited me to the finest fibre of my being. I cannot tell *why*, but I *loved* her.

It must have been that in the far-off country, there is something of which souls are made, and our souls were of the same material, for they were as near alike as fire, and flame, ice and water. *Her* soul was but *my* soul refined and intensified.

They took her away from me. I can remember how the blue veins swelled in that fair forehead, and the red burned into those pale, soft cheeks. They robbed her for the burial, and as I sat beside my beautiful dead I knew it was a demon-holiday, a like-wake of goblins!

It was many years ere Orna rested on the heart which *had* been Nora's, but it is *her* home now. She is good and fair, but sometimes oh, buried Nora, thou wilt arise as to-night, and put

nside the long grass from over thy grave, and lay    heart that beats against my own, my heart has  
thy head upon my breast till once again in the    found its mate!

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## THE TWO CLARAS.

BY ELLA RODMAN.

CLARA LEDSTED was an Eastern girl, not one of those who lie curled up on the soft cushions, loaded down with golden fetters—no, indeed! such a one could never put forth the least claim to the Yankee gift of “spryness.” Clara’s native state was the one ennobled by the birth of such men as Adams and Hancock; where “the young ladies,” after wielding the broom all the morning in true housewifery style, sit down in the parlor, of an afternoon, with every appearance of being “to the manner born.”

But notwithstanding the force of birth and education, Clara’s conduct failed to give general satisfaction. Mr. Ledsted was rich, for a farmer; he lived in a large house, and had numerous acres of ground to be planted and reaped. These acres required “hired hands,” and hired hands made work for the “women-folks;” therefore, Miss Clara, instead of spoiling her pretty hands with household drudgery, and bending her back with milking and churning, established two “helps” in the great, old-fashioned house, and considered her duties well-performed in superintending this menage.

“It was not so in her mother’s time,” as the neighbors reproachfully observed; Mrs. Ledsted had been a thrifty, hard-working woman; but it was now several years since her death; and Clara had been left so much to her own inclinations, and the easy management of an indulgent father, that she ordered things entirely her own way, and certainly contrived to make the old house look comfortable and inviting. Mr. Ledsted was always busy about the farm; and as long as his meals were in readiness at the appointed time, and the house in perfect order, he took no pains of inquiring into the house-keeping affairs, and naturally supposed that if he made more money he must expect to spend more.

Clara had abundant leisure for reading; and when the weekly paper arrived, she seized it with the greatest eagerness, and absolutely devoured every scrap of stale news, and all the week-old movements of the Senate and Congress. She pored over the extracts of popular speeches until she fairly exalted the various representatives into demi-gods—and imagined some gifted being, with “the front of Jove,” and an eye that

did the business of half-a-dozen common tongues, pouring forth “thoughts that breathe and words that burn,” until the exhausting nature of intense admiration should cry out enough! and then this divine being was to place himself at her feet, and acknowledge that *she* had conquered him who had, himself, conquered all.

This was Clara’s day-dream; and she would read, “Honorable so and so and lady,” and think how well it sounded—what a much grander flow in “honorable” than plain “Mr.”

“Yes,” said Clara, one evening, to her father, partly in jest, “I shall not go lower than an ‘Honorable.’”

“That *may* be ‘low’ enough,” replied Mr. Ledsted, not in the least sympathizing with his daughter’s penchant for titles and distinctions.

Clara smiled, as she took up her sewing, and fell to building castles in the air, which ended in her being President’s lady.

Notwithstanding Clara’s often denounced disposition to “stick up,” she has not arrived at the venerable age of seventeen without receiving varicous hints that daughters were not expected *always* to stay at home and keep house for their fathers. The most acceptable of these hints had been daily expected from a young farmer named Philip Norham.

Philip had such a flattering way of expressing himself in looks—while his quiet, respectful manner was especially approved by the self-sufficient young lady. He was very good-looking, too; at least six feet high, with deep, hazel eyes that, when he was pleased or excited, were lit up with a bright glow; but he would have been scarcely more at ease in dancing than one of his own cows, and although he harmonized very well with the surroundings of a farmer’s life, he would have been decidedly out of place in that hall of eloquence that was always floating through Clara’s mind.

There was another drawback to Philip’s pretensions, and a pretty substantial one, too, in Miss Sally Norham, the maiden sister who most literally took charge of his affairs. Miss Sally was stout and strongly made; she had never had a day’s illness in her life, and experienced no sympathy for those who professed themselves too weak for hard work. She was a driver of

the first order, and knocked off work as though it had been an enemy whom she took a pleasure in despatching—"hired help" she despised—and all precautions against tanning, freckling, and red hands were regarded by her as so many evidences of a weak mind.

She ruled Philip with a rod of iron; several years seniority had given her a complete influence over him, and she looked with no favorable eye upon the progress of affairs between him and Clara. She was fortunately ignorant of that young lady's peculiar views; and cherished an idea which, in her expressive language, found vent in the words, that "all the girls around were ready to throw themselves at Philip's head." She now and then conjured up a sort of myth who was to be "Philip's wife"—a pale, meek, little woman, who would bake, and brew, and churn according to directions, and not presume to say that her head was her own if Miss Sally claimed the possession. Still, she preferred reigning without a subordinate; and was very well satisfied that Philip seemed disposed to defer the evil day.

One bright, October afternoon, Clara took her sewing, and went over to sit awhile with Miss Sally Norham. It was an unfortunate visit in every respect. Miss Sally was engaged in the congenial occupation of filling a feather bed; and Clara's modest lifting of the great, brass knocker brought, from an upper window, the encouraging question of,

"Who the plague is that?"

"It is I," was the reply, "Clara Ledsted."

"I wish that *I* would stay at home!" muttered Miss Sally, "and not be troubling industrious neighbors." Then in a louder tone, she added, "Well, I don't know how on sirth you're goin' to get in, unless you crawl through the winder. I can't leave these ere feathers."

Clara replied with a pleasant laugh; she was not unamiable, and disposed to make full allowance for Miss Sally's peculiarities and house-keeping duties; so, telling her not to trouble herself, which elicited from the cross spinster a grunt, which seemed to say that she would like to catch herself at it, Clara walked around to the back of the house, and Miss Sally returned to her feathers, devoutly hoping that she wouldn't get in.

But Clara was well acquainted with all the modes of ingress pertaining to the building, and having laughingly scrambled through a small window, she seated herself in "the keeping-room" to await Miss Sally's entrance.

That lady had no intention of hurrying herself; and after disposing of the feathers in a very moderate manner, she made a very plain

toilet, and appeared with a face shining, not with hospitality, but from the effects of brown soap and a coarse towel. Miss Sally was not handsome, and a constant exposure to sun and wind is not at all improving; her expression was hard and unconciliating.

"What do you call *that*?" said she, giving a most disrespectful twitch to the piece of fine muslin in Clara's hand.

Clara informed her that she was embroidering a ruffie.

"When people *pretend* to work," said Miss Sally, with infinite contempt, "I like to see 'em do it!"

This remark only caused a smile, and was set down to the spinster's old-fashioned prejudices. Clara possessed the forbearance that always accompanies a high and generous temper, and a certain sarcastic power of repartee was kept as a corps du reserve—to be used only in cases of extreme need. Miss Sally's arrows had, so far, proved mere harmless playthings; but she seemed bent upon quarrelling, and soon tried Clara upon another tack. She began to talk of Philip, and his qualifications for matrimony.

"Any girl might be glad enough to get Philip!" said Miss Sally, in an emphatic tone.

The rockers of Clara's chair moved rapidly, but she said nothing.

"I do hope," continued his sister, that when Philip *does* marry, he will get a sensible, hard-working girl, that can take care of things—not one of your fine ladies who are afraid to soil their hands!"

The look that accompanied this remark was more expressive than the words, and Clara felt completely roused.

"Yes," she replied, very quietly, "it is very foolish for people to marry out of their stations. A man who is not rich should, as you say, have have a hard-working wife—but I don't think that *I* would suit a poor man any better than he would suit me."

"*Poor!*" almost shrieked Miss Sally, "who said that Philip was *poor*? It's no such thing! He's as well off as his neighbors, any day!"

It was now a regular quarrel, and Clara gathered up her things, as she replied,

"When people talk of 'hard-working' and 'saving,' the natural impression is, that they must be poor—but there is no *harm* in honest poverty."

Miss Sally muttered; "Hussy!" *scarcely* under her teeth, and was so perfectly astonished at this novel interpretation of her superior good sense, that the power of speech quite failed her.

Clara ran home in triumph; but the two

"helps" had gone to the neighboring town, and upon her devolved the necessity of preparing her father's supper. She entered the spacious kitchen, and went as systematically to work as though she had always been accustomed to it; the blaze of the bright fire she had kindled was quite cheering on a chilly, October evening—the kettle was suspended—and as there were only two of them, she concluded to set the table there. She sang cheerful snatches of song, as she went about her work, and appeared to have driven Miss Sally entirely from her mind.

Now it so happened that Philip Norham, on his way home from a cattle-show, passed very near the kitchen-window, and attracted by the bright aspect of things, he paused and looked in. The kitchen had never looked so pleasant; but what was his astonishment to see Clara, herself, flitting around amid household duties with the air of one quite pleased with her vocation.

He thought she had never looked so lovely; suppose that it was *his* kitchen—that *she* was *his*—and that it was *his* supper she was preparing? The longer he gazed, the greater his desire to go in; and, at length, reflecting that he was arrayed in his best clothes, he fully persuaded himself that the critical moment had arrived—he was about to stake all his hopes upon the single venture of "popping the question."

Clara received him very calmly; and having concluded her arrangements, seated herself in one of the kitchen chairs with the air of an empress. Poor Philip felt direfully confused—it seemed to him as though Clara had been suddenly placed on some great height to which it was almost impossible to look up, and he certainly made a very awkward business of it. When he had said the very thing that he had no intention of saying, and felt painfully conscious of having acquitted himself miserably in the eyes of her whose approval was his greatest happiness, he sat like a criminal awaiting his sentence.

Clara told him that she respected him very highly—that she had no doubt he had the *power* within him of becoming a great man—that she considered herself very unfit for a farmer's wife—and that she was now consulting his true interests by declining his proposal. She advised him to apply himself to study; and felt quite sure that in the pursuit of fame he would soon forget *her*.

And Clara glided gracefully out of the room; while poor Philip walked home, feeling more bewildered than he had ever felt before. He could not go into the house *yet*; so he turned

into the lane, and went toward the barn. A favorite cow stood waiting for an opportunity to reach her shed; and as Philip let down the bars for her, he stroked the animal's neck, and said, half absently,

"You don't 'advise me to forget you,' do you, Brindle?"

Brindle answered with a characteristic "Moo," which was quite as much as could be expected of her; and Philip strolled on without any definite purpose.

"What are you goin' to do with that two-acre field?" called out a neighbor, "I should hev' it in oats."

"Oats!" repeated Philip, abstractedly, "I don't want any oats."

"Well, I guess the critters will, if *you* don't," replied the man, laughing, "'pears to me you must hev' bin tossed up in a blanket, or somethin'," he added, "you're generallly wide enough awake when anybody talks of fodder."

Philip sighed drearily as he retraced his steps—everything was altered with him now. His sister was coming from the cow-yard with two pails full of milk, and he hastened toward her. He felt as if he wished to relieve his full heart by being helpful to every one; but Miss Sally repulsed him with a characteristic jerk—giving vent, at the same time, to the expressive remark that "she wasn't made of white satin!" A mistake that no one could possibly indulge in for a moment.

When they were seated at the tea-table, Miss Sally informed her brother that "that saucy minx, Clara Ledsted, had been there—watching for *him*, like enough!—but she *did* hope that he didn't think of marrying *her*?"

"No," said Philip, gloomily, "I don't."

"I am glad of it!" returned his sister, "she is no more fit for any sensible man than a pullet is to chop wood. Those hands of hers *ought* to have been pin-cushioned—and I'm sure I felt enough like stickin' pins into 'em to-day!"

But Philip said that he was not very well, and soon went up to his own room; while Miss Sally was so delighted at the turn of affairs, that she meditated a house-cleaning jubilee the very next day.

Clara stood at her window, and wondered what made her gaze half-sorrowfully after a retreating figure; but then she said to herself: "No! I never *could* be satisfied to live on in that hum-drum way, and make bread and stitch my husband's shirts—I am intended for better things." So she said that her *destiny* had impelled her to refuse Philip Norham, and went back to her father's supper.



The winter months had commenced; and Clara Ledsted suddenly made the discovery that the country was a very dull place. An acceptance was written to the often-repeated invitations of a city cousin—papa's well-filled pocket-book was somewhat lightened—and having deposited an accommodating aunt in her place, Clara departed in the full hope of meeting with some of the heroes who had thronged her dreams.

The cousin pronounced her perfectly presentable; and Clara stood, one evening, before a mirror in the drawing-room, arrayed for her first ball. She was dressed to the last pin before her more experienced cousin thought of *commencing* operations; and she now ran into the dressing-room to survey herself at leisure.

Very well satisfied did she feel with the investigation. Her white crepe dress floated gracefully around her, and a wreath of pink rose-buds rested lightly on her bright brown curls. She advanced to the mirror and smiled. Then she retreated a little, and frowned. She was bewitching, dignified, and supplicating by turns; and she could scarcely decide which expression became her best. She practised the waltz that her cousin had taught her, and moved about as gracefully as a sylph. When she had finished, she joined her hands in an attitude of entreaty, and, with head slightly bent, stood before the mirror, as if awaiting the plaudits of an auditory.

A low laugh greeted her ear.

Now these various manoeuvres, although perfectly innocent in themselves, were decidedly embarrassing in the presence of spectators; and Clara sprang from her "attitude" to encounter the laughing eyes of a handsome, young officer.

It was to be a military ball; and this was the splendid-looking escort about whom her cousin had been going into ecstasies of admiration. A flashing of epaulettes, black eyes, gilt buttons, and white teeth seemed all mingled together; and without stopping to return his respectful brow, Clara rushed up stairs in a paroxysm of mortification.

She could scarcely command herself when, later in the evening, her cousin introduced her to Lieutenant Pearsall; but the officer evidently thought her vanity very pardonable, and hastened to engage her for the first quadrille with the greatest eagerness.

Poor Philip would have been puzzled to recognize his farm-house beauty in the brilliant belle of the ball; and Clara quite forgot that she had not been accustomed to such things all her life.

Lieutenant Pearsall was decidedly in love, and made an impetuous offer of his hand and heart

on their way home from the ball. Clara told him that it was very sudden—that she must take time to consider it; but even while she spoke, she contrasted his elegant manner with Philip's countrified style.

Her visit to the city was indefinitely prolonged; and one bright, May morning, Philip Norham started as if he had received an electric shock, while the paper in his hand trembled with his emotion. But his sister's sharp eye was upon him, and he walked out of the house without making any comment.

Miss Sally took up the paper, and after examining it carefully, put her finger upon the following paragraph:

"Married, on the fifth instant, Clara, only daughter of Jacob Ledsted, Esq., to Lieutenant George Pearsall, U. S. N."

Miss Sally gave an expressive "humph!" and rejoiced that Philip was safe.

Years rolled slowly on, and brought their usual changes. Since that eventful evening, Philip Norham had made the discovery that, beyond the knowledge necessary to manage a moderate sized farm, his stock of information was alarmingly small. He remembered Clara's words: "You have within you the *power* of becoming a great man," and although she may have forgotten them as soon as uttered, they retained a deep hold upon Philip's mind. True, he often laughed at the utter fallacy of the idea when he remembered *all*; but, while poring over his books, he loved to fancy himself toiling for some bright goal in the far distance.

Miss Sally thought it "foolish," this book-mania, and decidedly vetoed Philip's oft-repeated visits to the city in quest of treasures; but these were now his dearly-beloved companions, and the business of the farm fell almost entirely into the hands of his active sister. This was Miss Sally's natural element; and while she strided through the high grass in Philip's boots, chasing refractory chickens, seeking for eggs in impassible places, and often driving a procession of cattle, her brother was left undisturbed in his retreat.

The more that Philip learned, the more conscious did he become of his ignorance; and the more surprised at his presumption in having considered himself the equal of Clara Ledsted. Philip's altered views were perceptible in his demeanor; and the neighbors began to regard him with respect and admiration. But his added knowledge was not accompanied by self-consciousness; and never had Philip Norham been so much *loved* as now, when Time had slightly

silvered his hair and cast over his face the mellow radiance of a fruitful autumn.

He had never married; and so perseveringly avoided all associates but men that the belles of his native village had quite despaired of vanquishing so impracticable a subject.

At last, Philip's neighbors sent him to Congress. He had shrunk from the honor distrustfully, at first; but as time showed him his own powers, he listened to the persuasion of friends, and was successful.

A bright galaxy of beauty was assembled at the first effort of the "speaker from Massachusetts." Philip's sojourn at Washington had introduced him to those leading spirits who are essentially "the bone and sinew of the land;" and as they marked the frank, independent bearing, and quiet consciousness of reserved power in the new representative, they saw the rising of another star.

As Philip cast his eye over that crowd of fair women and noble men, a host of old recollections almost overpowered him as he thought of Clara, and how *she* would have sat there had they both been as they once were. No matter what he spoke about—whether it was the Maine Liquor Law, or the Abolition question; his speech was manly, eloquent, and enthusiastic; and as his fine eyes kindled, and his tall figure dilated with fresh dignity, many a bright young dreamer, like Clara of old, created him a demi-god and fell down and worshipped. It was the eloquence of a Cincinnatus fresh from the plough; and Philip's pale cheek was deeply flushed as he resumed his seat.

A pair of splendid eyes had watched every movement of the speaker; and when he sat down, the owner turned to answer the badinage of her companions.

"Really, Mrs. Keywood," exclaimed a voice from behind a dark moustache, "you will be answerable for overstocking the market with eloquent farmers, for such glances as these are enough to kindle one into following the plough at a moment's notice."

She smiled and made some laughing reply; but the most observant noticed that a cloud passed over her face, and her eyes followed the speaker.

"You have the bright, far-off look that characterized Mrs. Jellyby," remarked another, "although I am perfectly certain that you do see something 'nearer than Africa.'"

Mrs. Keywood roused herself, and proceeded to talk of indifferent things; but had she not been a rich, beautiful widow, they would not have considered her as interesting as usual.

Philip was courted by his associates, and loaded with the hospitalities of the place. A man of his age was not expected to *dance*; and with his quiet, thoughtful face, and imposing figure, he passed very well even in society so different from his early associations.

He was presented to the brilliant Mrs. Keywood; and realized, for the first time, the pleasure of conversing with an intelligent and cultivated woman. Her host of admirers were not particularly pleased to see the stranger singled out as an object of especial condescension, but the public voice declared that it was a settled match; and reports reached Philip's native place that he was the lion of the capitol, and on the very eve of marriage to a rich widow.

Let us see what has become of Clara.

Her officio-husband enjoyed his happiness but a short time; and when he died, Clara regretted him not as one to whom *she* had been tenderly devoted, but as one who had been tenderly devoted to *her*. Captivated by her beauty at first, he soon learned to respect the unerring tact and good sense which seemed to bind over and secure his admiration into enduring love. Clara was young and inexperienced when she married; she sometimes thought of Philip half regretfully, but then she remembered that she never could have sunk into the unvarying routine of so tame an existence; Lieutenant Pearsall was gentlemanly and refined, and had seen much of the world; under his guidance Clara repaired many of the defects in her early education, and the few years of their married life were uninterruptedly happy.

Jacob Ledsted died very suddenly, soon after his daughter's marriage; and the old place was sold and occupied by strange owners. Clara had, now, no tie to her native place; and as she never went back, all trace of her was lost. On the death of her husband, she found herself possessed of a small independence that enabled her to take up her permanent abode in the city. She was still young, and far more lovely than when she disdained the admiration of a plain farmer.

When her period of mourning had expired, the beautiful widow became all the rage; and having been a number of times besieged to that effect, she listened to the persuasions of Hiram Keywood, Esq., whose age more than doubled her own, and assisted him to diminish the contents of his overflowing coffers. Some people wondered if she *would* have married him divested of his surroundings; but these very people bowed low as Mrs. Keywood's splendid greys threw dust in their eyes, and considered themselves highly honored.

When Mr. Keywood died, his widow's position was the envy of her numerous circle of acquaintances. But she left them all and went off to Europe; spending years in foreign travel that enlarged her ideas, and developed the many talents that had scarcely shown themselves in girlhood.

She was beautiful, accomplished, wealthy; and although twenty years had now passed since she laid aside the name of Clara Ledsted, Time had touched her so lightly that no one would have guessed the years she had really numbered. Mrs. Keywood's admirers called her "plump"—her detractors pronounced her "fat;" and, if the truth must be told, there was little resemblance to the slight, girlish-looking Clara of former days. But her movements were so graceful, her bearing so dignified, that none but the malicious would have hinted at an undue proportion of flesh; and the widow, herself, carried off her allowance of pounds very lightly. Her brilliancy reminded one of the gorgeous-hued flowers of the tropics; and wherever she went she carried all captive before her.

It was thus that she met Philip Norham, after a separation of twenty years; and so much had he changed in the interval that it was by the name alone she recognized him. Her feelings upon this occasion were more tumultuous than she cared to acknowledge; and, for the first time, it struck her that she really loved him. She felt provoked at herself, and tried to call back her emotions like hounds to the leash, but they would not answer her bidding; and the more she saw of Philip, the more she valued the genius that, as a wayward girl, she had cast aside.

Philip returned home, well-surfeited with honors, and was received like a hero fresh from victory. The neighbors were delighted; and now that their representative had proved that there was something in him, they all began to imagine that they had the fashioning of him. And Philip smiled quietly as he thought what a piece of patchwork he would have been, had these worthy people all had a hand in him.

Miss Sally entirely disapproved of what she termed "Philip's airs;" with respect to his speeches, she observed that there were enough people in the world to do the talking without him; and when her brother insisted upon improving things a little, and actually provided himself with two house-servants, Miss Sally was so much displeased at "having folks placed over her head"—although the tallest of the "helps" just reached her shoulder—but she immediately married an old, prickly-pear of a man, who

seemed to have been manufactured expressly for her, and her brother's house was relieved of her presence forever.

People began to talk of the new purchaser of Jacob Ledsted's farm, a rich widow from the city; and then it came out that this was the very widow who had so enthralled their honorable representative in Washington. Clara bought back the old place, and made various alterations that gave rise to numerous remarks and conjectures.

Philip Norham considered it his duty to call upon his old acquaintance, for as she often passed him in her carriage it would have been awkward not to do so, and he evidently thought it his "duty" to follow up this call with others; but as he was known not to be a visiting man, people began to look knowing, and wonder "when it would be?" But Mrs. Keywood was always so surrounded by a throng of visitors that Philip had scarcely a chance of approaching her; and, at last, he despatched a note requesting a few minutes' private audience.

Widows have the especial prerogative of comprehending such things at a glance; and that day Mrs. Keywood was occupied in making some very singular preparations, and giving orders which servants not so well-trained as hers would have pronounced strange.

Philip pondered, as he went along, upon his singular trepidation in addressing Mrs. Keywood, when he had felt the very same emotion respecting Clara Ledsted; but there was the old house directly before him, and every circumstance connected with that well-remembered evening rose up distinctly.

He was conducted to a side room; and the passage seemed familiar. Through the open door the bright blaze of a wood fire—a kettle hung in the old place—and he stood in the well-remembered kitchen. He looked around for Clara; and the chair was well-filled by the more substantial figure of Mrs. Keywood.

She watched his face, as the firelight showed her its emotions, and oh! how she trembled as she sat there! But as an expression of pain crossed his features, and he turned as if to leave an unpleasant scene, she came forward and stood beside him.

"Philip Norham," said she, calling him by the old, familiar name, "I know why you came here to-night, and I have done this not to give you pain, but to see if you would remember one who was once dear to you. Twenty years, however, have done their work, and I am now a stranger in my father's house."

Tears dimmed her eyes; and Philip, bewildered yet hopeful, exclaimed,

"*Clara Ledsted!* Is this indeed *possible?*"

"Not '*Clara Ledsted,*'" she replied, turning with a sigh from the face that was glowing with honest delight, "but Clara Keywood—and, as such, unworthy of the heart you would have offered her."

"That heart," said Philip, with his gentle smile, "is now offered to the *two* Claras—will they *both* refuse it?"

"I have no right," murmured the widow, as she allowed him to retain the hand he had taken, "I despised you when you were unknown, Philip, and *now* they will say that I married you for the honors you have gained."

"They will say quite as bad things of me," replied Philip, gaily, "for they will call me '*fortune-hunter,*' at the very least."

Clara smiled as she reflected that she was now something more than an insignificant girl; and Philip added tenderly,

"Besides, Clara, you *have* '*a right.*' You told me, *then*, that you refused me for my own good, and so it would seem to have turned out—it was at *your* instigation that I endeavored to become great—and if the harvest is worthy your acceptance, to you it belongs for having sown the seed."

So Clara really married an "honorable" after all!

## DORIA'S AFFAIRS.

### A SEQUEL TO "DR. WETHERGREEN'S PRACTICE."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SUSY L——'S DIARY."

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 215.

#### CHAPTER V.

DORIA did not at first proceed to write letters. She thought awhile, first, of Captain Brooks, of Mrs. Brooks coming, of the probable import of his yesterday's "if," and whether she should go out with the sailing party that afternoon. She thought that she would go. She would go, effectually taking care of herself. She would let Capt. Brooks and the rest see—why that she was a sort of waif, to be sure, but then as comfortable as if she were the best man's fixture. She would—but, indeed! she would think and plan no more about it. Her way was not so hedged and ditched that she must spend all her tactics and forces in getting forward. These should be held in reserve for less impotent services; for diffusing clearness and agreeable life, day by day, to one and another, on her right hand and on her left. And there the matter was to end, for that time. She would write some letters then; letters to her mother, to Mrs. Ambrose, and they would keep them near them for days, and be much the less lonely for having read them. So good-bye, Captain Brooks; and all the rest there at the lake; and the afternoon sail. *Au revoir.*

On the whole, poor Doria's affairs went badly at the sail. In the first place, she went tripping on the way to the boat, sometimes by Caddy and Dr. Joseph, sometimes by the Dows, sometimes by Ambrose and his little Mary; and, at all times, with a merry sort of self-willed air, that kept all the right arms and all the left arms that would be helping her, essentially at bay. True, she had this thought, now and then, (and it half stifled her too for the moment) that she would feel better having her place, as Caddy and Mary had therein; knowing it and walking composedly in it. She would like the *repose* of the thing. As she hadn't it, however, see! she would go tripping and doing mischief if she could find any to do. Good! Ambrose's handkerchief corner peeped out of his pocket, as if roguishly to see what she roguishly was doing. She would steal it, now that he looked away off the other way, over little Mary's head, and pointed out afar-off the "Lady of the Lake" to her.

She got it! Out of his side pocket too, directly under his nose. She liked that! So did Captain Brooks, cross Mr. Marsh, and the rest who saw it. And this brought them to the boat. She sprang into the boat, the first of all; and deliberately (talking about it all the while) made her choice of the best seat, and sat down in it to see how the matters of adjustment went on with the others.

Captain Brooks came to sit by her. Ambrose helped him over, just as Doria had her mouth open and her head forward to say to Mr. Marsh, who looked from one seat to another, "Come to this seat, Mr. Marsh. I want to talk politics with you." Doria thought it was too bad, that Captain Brooks had come. She was still and a little stiff, in drawing her skirts and shawl aside; insomuch that when she raised her eyes to his, she saw plainly the deprecating expression as if he were saying within himself, "Nay, be gracious toward me, Miss Phillips; for I have given you no reason why you should not be."

The glance somehow made it instantly quiet within her, as she had before this felt that all of his glances had the power to do. She frolicked and defied no more, therefore; but sat talking in a cheerful way of whatever came into her thoughts. Once, in the course of the sail, when she saw that Mr. Marsh, from his solitary end of the boat, looked away with a dark glance over the water, she felt her heart touched for him; and sent this word forward to him, giving it first to Dr. Joseph, who sat before her—"Tell Mr. Marsh I want him to look at that bright point out there where the sail-boat goes round. Ask him if it is not beautiful."

Yes, Mr. Marsh thought it beautiful, he said, after having watched it a moment with brightening features; and he sent grateful looks back to Doria. It was better with him after this. He talked across the Dows, with Ambrose, and liked it; Ambrose was so vigorous! liked it far better for having so pretty, and to a certain extent so appreciative a listener as little Mary. With the Dows he, for his part, had done trying to get along. Mr. Dow was like stone, she like ice to him. Mr. Dow talked politics, but knew little

about them, merely repeating what his newspaper said. Still, he tipped his head and blinked his eyes knowingly; and fancied that he knew *about* as much as any other man. Mrs. Dow was without dogmatism; but so also was she without tact, which was quite as annoying to their sensitive neighbor. He was thinking about it when Doria's words came to him, and wishing, in his logical way, that this world, in the concrete, were somewhat commensurate with this world in the abstract. They touched at an island and went ashore to look for fringed gentians. Hendrick, the artist, found one there the day before he left, and brought it and gave it to Doria.

Doria had trouble in landing. The rocks were not large; but there were many of them scattered along, and water was between them. Mr. Marsh sprang out and held the boat to the rocks by the chain. Mr. Dow followed with his wife, Ambrose with Mary, Dr. Joseph with his Caddy; the boatmen went forward scrambling; and then came Doria, "on her own responsibility," as Mr. Dow had it. But a boulder on which she set a foot, rolled, and she was falling, when Captain Brooks saved her. She sprained her ankle, though; and on that account she was obliged to trust as much to Captain Brooks' arm as to her own feet in getting forward. He looked as if he were concerned for the sprained ankle, of course. He could do no less, with his quick sympathies and kindness; but he did look very well satisfied, very happy. He watched every step she took, as if she were his helpless child. He staid by her when the others went to hunt for the gentians; she sitting on a mossy rock in the warm sunshine, he standing, mostly in silence, close by her side. She spoke now and then upon the sunshine, the lake, and upon gentians. He, however, was no help to her in getting along. When she perceived this, she gave up trying to talk. She merely sat and kept her eyes away on the lake.

He helped her back into the boat; to the shore again when they landed near the house; helped her to the house with slow steps; for her ankle grew lamer and more painful every moment; and, when they reached the house, no one knew so well as he what was to be done for her.

Doria thought that night, that she had done no very great things in the way of taking care of herself that time. She thought that she would try it no more. She would go out no more; her sprained ankle, would be a sufficient plea for this. She would propose going home the next morning. If the rest were not ready, she would go. She wanted to be at home, in that dear place where her mother was; where she could

be quiet and have a chance to attend to herself; to her aching ankle and her confused thoughts. Yes; that was what she would do. She thanked God that there was such a beloved spot for her; such a sheltered spot; thanked him that to-morrow night her head would lie in it; and, as she gave thanks, she fell peacefully asleep.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE next morning, thanks to Dr. Wethergreen's arnica and Dr. Wethergreen's rhus, Doria's ankle was so far restored to soundness that she could make it no plea for hurrying home, or for keeping the house when the rest of the party went out. She talked, however, with Dr. Joseph when they were all in the parlor after breakfast, about their going, all of them, the next day; or, at the farthest, the next day but one. She wanted to be at home, she told him, with a grave face, a languid air. She wanted to be there with her mother where she could rest. And as he listened to her with his good, brotherly eyes on her face, it occurred to him that possibly, with Doria and with all those who are, in a way, alone in the world, there must often come fatigue and a want of rest, such as comes sometimes certainly, but far more rarely—in the very nature of their relative circumstances—to those who repose at all times in the strong one at their side, or in the thought of him if he is away. His eyes went from Doria to Captain Brooks, who sat near them at a window seat, with his chin on his hand and his eyes on the scene without. He said to him, "How much longer do *you* stay, Captain Brooks?"

Captain Brooks turned his head to say that he couldn't exactly tell. He thought it would not be long, not more than a day probably after she came—if he waited for Mrs. Brooks. He had just been thinking that, if she stayed much longer, he should not wait for her. He would like, for his part, to leave when they did, to go to M—— with them, and let Mrs. Brooks join him there. Dr. Joseph's face glowed at the plan. So did Ambrose's. Ambrose lay his hand on his shoulder, saying, "That's right, Captain Brooks! the very thing I've been thinking about this morning! For you see the winds will soon be rough up here," pointing to the dark clouds that lay in the west. "I shouldn't like to leave you here. At M—— is the place for us all now. Don't you say so, good Doria?"

Captain Brooks, as well as Ambrose, looked to hear what good Doria would say. He had in fact looked more to her than to Dr. Joseph all along. Little Mary Walton too came close

her, slipped her arm round her neck repeating Ambrose's question, "Won't it be good, Doria, dear, to be there again, all together? Captain Brooks and all? I didn't know that we would have him too there. Won't it be good?"

Doria said, "Yes, dear," and fondled her hand; but she didn't look up. She hadn't at all the appearance of discerning any great good in it. And Captain Brooks seemed to feel that she had not. He was again turning his head away to the window, when Ambrose said, starting impulsively, and taking his hand from his shoulder, "Come out here, Captain Brooks—we want to see Captain Walker before he goes out with his 'Lady,' you know," he added, on their way across the room. "He'll soon be too busy for us."

Dr. Joseph and the rest—or all but Doria—smiled to see him go; smiled to see the old, brisk air of "taking things in hand."

They were gone a long time. Nothing more was seen of them in the parlor until dinner time. Then Captain Brooks, with a face as grave as Doria's, walking by her side to the dining-room.

After dinner it was proposed that they all should go out for their last sail among the islands, from point to point, from light to shade, and from shade to light. Doria couldn't go, she said. And no persuasion could move her. She was cold; she was not really strong and well, she said. And, besides, she had already been out so many times! She would sit there in the warm parlor and read. She would enjoy that much better than going. Little Mary Walton called her "a naughty thing!" but kissed her as she said it; kissed her the last thing before going; and even ran back, when they were all ready in the door, to kiss her again, on each cheek and on her forehead. Ambrose came back and put himself into the parlor door, in part to see what Mary was about, in part to say to Doria, "You miss it, Doria, not going. To-morrow, likely as not, Mrs. Brooks will be here; and then what will you do for the captain's right arm?"

Mary hurried to him, interrupting him with rapid talk about being ready; waiting for him; and with her last "good-bye" to Doria.

The little thing longed to tell him that he mustn't say these things to Doria; that both she and Caddy believed that Doria missed Caddy, and inwardly mourned for her. But when she looked up to say it, he was so far above her and so calm, that her courage failed her. She felt, moreover, that one so noble and so kind as he was, must know at all times what it was good and right to say. So she looked up to him again,

thinking that of all the persons on the earth—not even excepting her father, of whom she held an exalted estimation—the "monstrous large" man at her side was the best, and, to her, the dearest. He seemed to understand that this was what she was thinking, for the glance of his eye and the tones of his voice were very tender, as he said softly to her, "You are a dear little Mary."

## CHAPTER VII.

"Oh, that queer fellow, Marsh, had something he wanted them to see down the lake a little way," Doria heard Mr. Dow say in the hall. She heard also several steps on the door stones and in the hall; heard Mr. Dow say farther, as the steps advanced, "Is the captain here, Miss Dow and I came away without them. We didn't——" Doria listened for no more; but leaving her chair with quick steps like a hart that flies, she made haste to get away to her chamber. But she met Captain Brooks at the door. (The Dows had gone directly to their chamber.) He stopped before her; both his imploring eyes and his lips saying, "One moment, Miss Phillips. I want to speak with you one moment."

She turned back with steps loth and slow. She neither looked up nor spoke, as she recrossed the room to her old seat. Captain Brooks, who observed her closely, seemed not at first to know how to begin what he had to say. But soon the faltering manner, the faltering tones were gone; and, in their stead, were the easy attitude, the clear open face and speech, as if he had been thinking, "I am a man in what I have to say; and let what will come of it, I can meet it and bear it like a man."

"Miss Phillips," he began, "our good friend Ambrose has been explaining to me to-day, that that you—in short, that you think me married; married to the Mrs. Brooks who is coming. Or who is *not* coming, as it appears; for I have just had a letter from my only brother, who is her husband, saying that he will be in Boston on the twentieth, and that he wants her to be there to meet him. He has been six months in Sacramento."

He paused here; but Doria did not speak. First with pale then with glowing cheeks, she sat motionless, listening.

"I have had a wife," he added, with softened tones, and drawing near Doria to lay his hand on her chair. "She has been dead two years. She had been two years my wife—two hard years they were for us both; for we were poor and my business was bad. I was an architect, or trying and waiting to be one, at M——."

"At M——?" asked Doria, looking up now with all the interest she could require in his face.

"Yes. My child died there; Dr. Wethergreen and Ambrose both came to me at the time."

Yes, Doria remembered. She remembered with tears in her eyes.

"I went to California soon after," he added, still with subdued tones, and with his hand lying lightly on Dorin's head; for he had seen the tears in her eyes, and felt himself drawn to her by the sight. "I met Ambrose there. And from that hour my way has been easy. He took me in hand, to use his own expressive phrase," he continued, smiling, "and now I have a tolerable fortune, made upon the investment of a principal all his own, in fact."

"He is the best man I ever saw!" cried Doria, her emotion choking her.

"Who is? who is the best man you ever saw?" demanded Ambrose. He was within the room and had overheard the last words.

"Not you! not you!" said Doria, with something of the old lively mockery in her tones and face.

"He, then?" tossing his hand toward Captain Brooks. "Captain Brooks?"

"Yes, Captain Brooks." She did not think but that she would say this with the same tones, with the same lively manner. But there came at once thoughts of his hard life, thoughts that he loved her, that he would choose her to be his companion and comfort; thoughts of all she would be to him; of all he, with his great goodness and talent, would be to her. And one far less interested in her words, far less observant than Captain Brooks, would have felt what it meant, the slowly bowed head, the mellowed tones.

How much he felt it, no words of his, if he had essayed them, could have told. He took her hand in his and bowed his lips to it. He looked in her half-upturned face and said, "Miss Phillips!—beloved!" And that was all. That was their betrothal. He and she, loving God, trusting in God even in a deeper way than they loved and trusted in each other, could thenceforth have rest; in God and in each other, in this life and in the eternal.

Kind-hearted Ambrose, with laughter and yet tears in his eyes, said, "Good! Bravo!" adding after a slight pause, "this is what I meant and planned before we came from California, you see, Doria. After we came, I had him there several days at the City Hotel, at M——, trying to think how I could bring you together in such a manner that your 'folly' shouldn't take alarm and come

popping in to spoil things. I knew that, if I brought him in as a single gentleman, you would be seen, directly, trudging off toward one of the poles. Toward the south pole I supposed it would be, because that is farthest. It happened just right here. Good! I'm glad! I wonder if my little Mary down here isn't glad."

## CHAPTER VIII.

THERE was a fire at M——; in a night of stinging cold; for winter had come. It originated in Mrs. Phillips' house; and already, when it was first seen, had made such headway, that little could be done. Captain Brooks and Doria—his wife she was now—were away; were in New York where "the Sontag" was singing, where the Crystal Palace was building, and where so much went on. Mrs. Phillips could tell them—could tell Ambrose, for he was on the spot, seeing to her, seeing to everything—where the silver was, in what closet, and where money and valuable papers were. He went with another, a fireman, through the smoke and darkness, and brought them.

"Mary—I don't understand why we don't see Irish Mary," said Mrs. Phillips, with alarm gathering in her features.

Ambrose started from her and went with strained eyes through the crowd, searching and questioning. Then he was out of sight within the house where the flames darted and the smoke rolled.

"Oh, God!" prayed Mrs. Phillips, wringing her hands, giving up her basket of silver filled with silver, into the nearest hands. Into whose hands she neither knew nor cared. All the silver in the world was as dross to her in that terrible moment.

But he came out safely, as it seemed, with Irish Mary; bearing her in his arms as if she were dead. He took her into Mr. Walton's, whose house, although near, was safe because of brick, and because the sturdy firemen had determined to do their best with it.

Mary was soon restored. She had become insensible from terror and suffocation. And then it was seen that Ambrose was sitting ghastly pale and with his white handkerchief filled with blood.

Little Mary Walton, when she heard the exclamations, left Irish Mary and Mrs. Phillips and came with rushing affright, with a face as pale as Ambrose's. She sank down at his feet like a reed that is broken, clinging to his hand and weeping. (On her birthday, that was not far off, she was to be made his wife.) Others



came, pale and in tears; his poor mother and little Nan among the rest.

Dr. Wethergreen came. He came after that, several times in a day. Other physicians, physicians of experience and note came, and did their best for the suffering, the patient, the so widely, so dearly beloved. Prayers and love united themselves with skill to hold him back, "For his mother's sake; for poor little Mary's sake," people said, with tears streaming. "For my sake, blessed Lord Jesus!" Irish Mary said, lying awake to hold her beads, to say her prayers and weep; to wish out of the depths of her soul, that she could save him by her own death, by her own suffering here or hereafter. She would not care *what* came to her if he could be saved to his mother and his darl'n.

But he died on an early spring day when all the world was waking to renewed life, and the hammers and saws of the workmen were heard on the new house. He died in a blessed way; as the heroic, the self-forgetting martyr dies, with heaven in his eye and on his tongue.

So that his mother, little Mary and all were carried above their sorrow. They felt the world where love goes on, ever on, with its ties in no fear of being broken, very near to them, in that one so soon to enter there, spoke to them of its delights. They could sing with him the simple words that everybody knows, that, sang with him, had such thrilling significance—

"He delivered me when bound,  
And when bleeding, healed my wound;  
Sought me wand'ring, set me right,  
Turned my darkness into light."

He sang with a feeble voice, so that he could hardly be heard unless little Mary and Doria sang very softly; and his cheek lay on his hand like a babies; but a smile was about his lips, and they all saw that his face shone, as it were, "like the face of an angel."

It shone when he died. He died with a smile on his lips, murmuring,

"Sought me wand'ring—set me right—  
Turned my darkness into light."

## CHAPTER IX.

In a lonely part of that lovely place of the dead, "The Valley," close by where the brook ripples and the hare-bells blossom in their time, sleeps the active brain; are folded the active hands. Little Mary Walton goes often with Doria, or Caddy, or some other who mourns for him tenderly, carrying a flower that she loves, that she has kissed, and on which her tears have fallen, to leave it there, when she comes away,

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in the soft grass above his head. She smiles at the same time that she weeps; for she says, "His life and his death were so—so sublime, as it seems to me! and then, you see, it makes me so thankful to know that he loved me as he did!"

His poor mother never goes there. The reason that she gives is that "she don't feel really able to go; that she don't feel so strong as she did a year ago." She says it with quivering muscles; sometimes even shaken with cold, in the midst of the summer heat. For the rest, she keeps herself very active about her house, seeing to Dr. Joseph's comfort as if he were her son, to Caddy's as if she were her daughter; keeping the lively Juliet Wethergreen (the doctor's ten-year-old sister) there that little Nan's life may not be lonely; caring little for herself if she may be kept from murmuring, if she may follow the example of her blessed son in doing good, and at last be with him in the land where will be no more partings, no more death.

Irish Mary, Mary McGavin now, runs in often to see her. She told her one day, weeping as if she would lose her reason, that she prayed half of her time that the Lord Jesus would forgive her for being the cause (the *innocent* cause she was, as the Lord Jesus knew,) of the death of him as was so much fitter to live than she, poor Irish Mary. Mrs. Ambrose soothed and comforted her, that time. And, from that time, Irish Mary mentioned Ambrose no more; but kept as far as possible from everything that could bring him to her own mind, or to his mother's. She had tears in her eyes often; but she said and did the liveliest, most humorous things, so that no one of all who came essaying one and another means of consolation, left Mrs. Ambrose so tranquilized as did Irish Mary.

When Mrs. Phillips and her son-in-law, the architect, would build a new house on the site of the old, people looked "for something handsome," as they said; for gable windows and bay windows, and trellises and balconies, since it was known there at M—— that Captain Brooks had a hand in planning the charming little Grecian, Italian and Swiss villas, that, in the last six months, had been coming in among the plain, white dwellings, like beautiful gems, as it were, in the midst of the hard granite. But, partly on account of the perfect convenience of the internal construction, partly on account of the family love for the old, familiar rooms, the new house was made large and high, and in all respects like the old; only, without, it was of brick; and it had more delicate sashes, purer glass; had an iron yard, based upon granite, in place of the old white paling.

They were all pleased with the house; but solemn thoughts were mingled with the liking; for they did not forget Ambrose; hardly for an hour did they forget him. It seemed to them, Doria and her husband said to each other, that, in a peculiar way, his mantle had fallen on all in that house; that, in a peculiar way, it was required of them to keep themselves pure and to do good "while the day lasted."

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## FRED GRAYSON'S TWO PROPOSALS.

BY CARRY STANLEY.

### CHAPTER I.

"It won't do, my good uncle—that salt can't catch this bird; I'm confoundedly afraid that nothing but 'attic salt' ever will," muttered Fred Grayson, with a half whimsical, half melancholy smile, as he gazed around his little office, to which he vainly endeavored to give a business-like appearance, and through the open door into a poorly furnished sleeping apartment beyond.

And Fred Grayson, as his chums familiarly called him, or "Frederic Grayson, Attorney at Law," as the little sign on his window shutter denoted him to be, set himself busily to work to overturn everything on his desk, not forgetting to place some bundles of papers, tied with red tape, in a most conspicuous place.

"I vow there isn't a good-looking girl left in the whole city," soliloquized Fred, when all this was done, going to the window which overlooked Independence Square—"even those demure little Quaker girls, with their sweet complexions and red lips, that used to troop past here to school, are off for their summer's holiday; and those plump, healthy-looking nursery-maids, who turned the rope for the children, in the Square, are no doubt flirting with some Adonis of a coachman or waiter at a fashionable watering-place. Everybody's off somewhere but these confounded flies, and they seem never to need summer recreation. Heigh-ho! well I guess I might as well answer the old gentleman's letter. Gad! I couldn't say a press of business prevented."

In a few moments the drowsy stillness of the room was interrupted, by the pen scratching quickly over the paper, and before the letter was concluded an impatient rap was heard at the door. Fred had not time to assume a business-like air, and call out, "come in," before the door was opened with a "how are you, old fellow? Back again all safe, you see," and the young lawyer's particular orony, Jack Templeton, threw himself into his friend's comfortable arm-chair.

"By Jove, Jack, I'm glad to see you; where did you drop from?"

"Not from the gallows yet, Fred, my boy; but I only got home last night from 'doing the tower of the lakes,' as a fashionable, 'fair fat' (but *wasn't* she fat?) 'and forty,' lady of New York told me she had done."

"But you surely don't intend to stay in town during the dog-days, do you?" asked Fred.

"Not I! I'm on the wing again directly, and it'll be Newport this time, so pack up your traps and come along. I'll be your banker till you get your first case."

"Thank you, Jack," said Frederic Grayson, warmly, whilst a fine glow spread over his face, "but there's no need of that. I always manage to live within my income, you know——"

"I'll be hanged if that isn't more than I do sometimes, rich as I am," broke in Jack.

"Indeed," continued Fred, without heeding the interruption, "business is looking up. Some poor fellow gave me twenty-five dollars the other day for 'an opinion;' it wasn't much of an opinion, to be sure;" but he had more money than brains, so I pocketed it."

"Then you'll run down to Newport with me for a month?"

"I'll not promise for a month, till I see how my purse holds out, but I'm your man for two weeks, at any rate. When do we start?"

"To-morrow, if you are ready."

"Well, my friend, that will depend upon that respectable lady, Mrs. O'Flatherty, who kindly takes charge of the washable part of my wardrobe. In fact, so jealously does she guard it, that she only returns me a limited number of pieces at a time; and if she was not a woman, I should suspect that some of the articles were worn before they were sent back. Why, Jack, I could support a wife on what shirts, handkerchiefs and stockings cost me."

"Well, let's hunt up your friend O'Flatherty, and be off to-morrow."

"Just wait a few moments, old fellow, till I superscribe myself 'your most affectionate and dutiful nephew,' to the governor. I am not dutiful though, I'll be hanged if I am. The good man is as great a manoeuvrer in the matrimonial line as any snuff-taking, tea-drinking old woman could be. I got a letter from him this morning, urging me to hurry down to Beechhurst, as there was a great heiress staying with my cousin Lizzie. According to uncle Fred, she has all the beauties and virtues under the sun, her immense wealth being the principal one, I suppose."

"Who is she?" asked Mr. Templeton.

"I don't know. Some school girl acquaintance of Lizzie's, I suppose, but I never heard her speak of any one who is as rich as uncle represents this one to be. He is forever looking out for a wealthy wife for me, and I declare the next time he does it, I'll just tell him that if he teases me any more, I'll marry cousin Lizzie. I won't be poaching on your preserves, eh, Jack!"

"Go ahead, Fred, I have no fear; Lizzie Grayson wouldn't have you if your head was hung with diamonds," as the old women say, much less with an income of only a thousand dollars a year, and with a practice not worth more than a hundred or two dollars, at the most."

"Well, it is a hard case. I have a great many good domestic qualities, and I certainly require a wife, with all my soft susceptibilities and lost shirt collars, but dame Fortune will not favor me. I never could marry a woman for her money, Jack; if I could make up my mind to try, I should be sure to tell her of it before I got her," and so saying, Frederic Grayson turned to his desk to finish his letter.

Presently he looked up with a gay laugh, exclaiming,

"I say, Jack! wouldn't it be comical for me to promise 'with all my worldly goods, I thee endow?' By Jove, I'm afraid that my wardrobe and library would be all I can conscientiously call my own, and in truth part of the wardrobe seems to belong to Mrs. O'Flatherty. Marrying on twelve hundred dollars a year and prospects! Whew!

"Come," continued Fred, taking his hat, and putting the letter in his pocket, "let's post this; I have concluded it with the assurance that I am so poor that I never intend to marry, without I find a mermaid at Newport who will be charmed with me in my Greek bathing-dress. Imagine me, Jack, disappearing from your view in the arms of a siren with long green hair."

## CHAPTER II.

THE two friends arrived at Newport, just as the gay season was commencing, and were soon among the most popular young men there. Jack Templeton's finished manners and fine horses, and the magnified rumor of his wealth, made him courted everywhere; while Fred Grayson, if not quite so popular with papas and mammas, was even more so with the young ladies, for he danced, and sung, and flirted with a grace that could not be surpassed. Many a fair girl sighed, as mamma, in the chamber consultation, endeavored to force upon her silly little brain, the fact that Mr. Grayson was only a poor lawyer, and consequently quite ineligible; and she

began to question her own heart, whether ingrain carpets, mahogany and hair-cloth furniture, and a maid of all work would be so terrible after all, with a man like Fred Grayson. But mamma knew the world and came off victor, as mamma's who know the world always do; and the daughter would give a little sigh, and determine that she might without any risk waltz and flirt with the fascinating Fred Grayson, only she must not think any more of him when she was alone, but rather turn her attention in the direction of his friend, Jack Templeton, who drove a splendid pair of horses.

It was on one of those boiling days in August, that Frederic Grayson entered the hall of the Ocean House, and was met by his friend with the question, "Well, what luck, Fred? I don't believe that you caught a fish."

"Splendid luck," was the reply, "but I didn't know what to do with them, you know."

Templeton gave an incredulous laugh, and at last elicited the fact, that the lines had quietly lain beside Fred in the boat, and that he had stretched himself on a seat and gazed up into the blue sky, with a *dolce far niente* kind of feeling, and dreamed away the whole morning thus.

"Your face is burnt to a blister almost," said Jack.

"*N'importe!* Mrs. Burtle has discovered that I'm as poor as a church mouse, and has cautioned that pretty little doll of a daughter against me. But I'm monstrously hungry, so I must hurry and dress by the time the gong sounds," and whistling, as he ascended the stairs, two steps at a time, Fred disappeared.

Dinner was at last announced. The viands on the table seemed to send up a double amount of steam; old gentlemen puffed and wiped their bald heads till they shone again; and young gentlemen pulled up their limp collars, and settled their white vests, and observed to their fair neighbors that "it was a very exceedingly warm day." Matrons fanned and grew fretful with the heat, and in savage undertones requested their lords "for mercy sake to lift their chairs from their dresses, for it wasn't so easy getting them replaced, goodness only knew;" and young girls, conscious of their roses spreading over foreheads as well as cheeks, and of their being of a most unbecoming brightness, fanned away in sullen silence, with clouds on the brow and pouts on the lip.

Fred Grayson gazed down the long lines of tables with much amusement, but he was desperately hungry, so he soon addressed himself to his soup and fish. He was about raising a large (yes, we must admit that it was large) fork full

of fish to his mouth, when he suddenly put it down, exclaiming, "By Jove! Jack, look down there."

Templeton glanced in the direction indicated, when he saw an elderly lady and gentleman, accompanied by a younger lady advance up the room, and take the three vacant seats opposite to where they sat.

A party of this kind would have been nothing remarkable probably on any day but one like this, but it seemed refreshing now, just to look at that young girl. She came up the room without a flush on her calm face, and with her white muslin draperies floating in soft, cool folds about her.

"I feel as if a sea breeze had blown over me," said Fred, enthusiastically, after another long look. "She is as stately as a calla, and as cool and dewy as those water lilies which are drooping from her hair."

"I thought you were hungry," replied his more phlegmatic friend, with his mouth full.

Fred again commenced his dinner, but presently looked up to encounter the full light of a pair of the finest hazle eyes he had ever seen.

He lowered his head and whispered anxiously, "I say, Jack! do I look as red as a boiled lobster?"

The answer, in a key loud enough to be heard across the table, was,

"Yes, you look like the very deuce."

In spite of this unsatisfactory reply, Fred could not for the life of him help glancing over at his fair neighbor again. There was a merry light dancing in her eyes, which she soon veiled with their white lids and long fringes, but the smile kept dimpling and playing around her mouth in spite of her, and when soon after Fred again looked across and caught her eye, an unrestrained smile spread over both their faces.

The two friends lingered over their dessert till the party opposite rose to leave the table, and Grayson watched in vain to see if any of his numerous acquaintance recognized them, as they passed down the room. It was in vain also, that after this, Fred would pass over the oyster pates, lobster salad, or any other delicacy which might be near him, to the gentleman of the party, hoping eventually his politeness might lead to something more than a mere "thank you" from his neighbor, or a half comprehensive glance from the younger lady.

### CHAPTER III.

"HERE'S a sop for Cerebus, Jack," said Fred, one morning, as he hurried past with newspaper

in hand, "if the 'last news by the Baltic' don't fetch the old gentleman, nothing will."

Fred Grayson understood human nature. "The last news by the Baltic" did "fetch" Mr. Mason, and Fred assiduously cultivated the acquaintance, to be at last introduced to the old gentleman's niece, Miss Virginia Surrey. A mysterious sparkle flashed over the young lady's face as she curtsied, with mock gravity, and Grayson began to suspect that in a war of wits, he might come off vanquished.

"Mr. Grayson," murmured Miss Surrey, thoughtfully, "pray, are you any relation of my friend, Miss Lizzie Grayson, of Beechhurst?"

"Her own cousin," answered Fred, with sparkling eyes, delighted that the relationship would most probably put him on a more intimate footing with the beautiful girl before him.

There was a spice of coquetry in Virginia Surrey's nature. She had observed Fred's evident admiration of her fair self, but she had a slight score yet to wipe off with him.

"I passed two weeks most delightfully, at Beechhurst, this summer," continued Virginia, with a sly glance out of the corner of her eye, to see the effect of her announcement.

"You?" asked Grayson, incredulously, "I never heard Lizzie speak of any one of your name."

"Probably not. Of course *you* are not the cousin, who, when Lizzie and I were at St. Mary's school together, wrote to her and advised her to 'break off her intimacy with that hoyden Ginny Mason!'" and a crimson flush suffused Miss Surrey's face and neck as she spoke, lasting but a few moments, however, for she burst into a gay laugh as she glanced at Fred's appalled face.

"You will never make your fortune at the bar, Mr. Grayson, you are put out of countenance too easily for a lawyer," continued the young lady, mischievously.

"But I do not understand it yet," muttered Fred, with a somewhat bewildered air, and a feeling of vexation that he had thrown away such a chance of intimate acquaintanceship, as the two weeks at his uncle's would have afforded him.

"An uncle of my mother's died and left me some property, upon the condition of my taking the name with the money," answered Miss Surrey, indifferently.

Fred Grayson was still in a whirl. All his previous prejudices were being rapidly annihilated. He had exiled himself from Beechhurst, and come to Newport to fall more than half in love with an heiress, even before he was

introduced to her, and she felt ready to surrender unconditionally to the very Ginny Mason, who had been at the head of all the school girl mischief at "St. Mary's," and against whom he had cautioned his gentle, lady-like cousin Lizzie.

Virginia Surrey saw her advantage, and it was with difficulty that she could keep the smiles from rippling over her face, as she demurely continued,

"How Lizzie and I pitied you, being tied down to that odious Coke and Blackstone, and worried to death with olivets," here a satirical light gleamed from her saucy brown eyes, "whilst we were strolling through the woods; singing duets, or scampering over the country on Firefly and Trumper."

"Did you ride Firefly?" asked Fred, in astonishment.

"Every day whilst I was at Beechhurst," replied Miss Surrey, nonchalantly.

Grayson forgot himself so far as to be on the point of giving a prolonged whistle, and *did* absolutely stare at the fair figure before him. There sat a young girl, coolly talking of riding a horse, so fiery that Fred flattered himself scarce a gentleman but himself could mount him, her white dress floating breezily around her, the tip of her tiny foot just displayed, and fluttering her fan with all the grace and coquetry of a Spanish belle.

The longer Fred conversed with her, the more recklessly in love did he become, although Virginia Surrey overturned nearly all his previously cherished notions of womanhood.

Frederic Grayson knew he was too poor to think seriously of matrimony, but he had had plenty of time to dream before his blazing grate fire, during the winter twilights, and he had often fancied to himself a comfortable home, presided over by a fair, graceful figure, who would look up to him with reverence; with no more intellect, perhaps, than would lead her to appreciate a fine piece of poetry, when read by his magical voice; and here he was really in love with a girl who glanced upon him like an *ignis fatuus*, who did not appear to care a fig for his opinions, was somewhat tinged with "strong-mindedness," whom he suspected had never read a line of poetry in her life, and who was, moreover, an heiress, a being whom he, in his Quixotism, had vowed never to marry.

"I know she rides like an Amazon," muttered Fred, "if she ever mounted Firefly, and I shouldn't be surprised if she swam like a duck, could trim a boat with the best sailor on Nantucket, or drove a four-in-hand better than the Russian whiskerando who flourishes here

so extensively. But then, by Jove! how she wears a scarf; it's the perfection of grace," and Fred promenaded the piazza in a reverie, unmindful of the many bright glances cast upon him.

The two weeks which Grayson had allotted to himself for his summer trip had already extended to nearly a month. Templeton was growing impatient to return home, but he saw no chance of tearing his friend away from Virginia Surrey. Fred had become her most devoted cavalier on all occasions; he rode with her; danced with her; sung with her; quoted poetry to her by moonlight; (she *did* like poetry after all) in short, did everything that showed he was desperately in love, except propose.

And yet the expression of Virginia's half veiled eyes, the warm smile of welcome, and the vivid blush was scarce to be mistaken.

"You are a fool if you don't offer yourself, Fred," said Jack. "Without meaning to impeach her modesty at all, one can see with half an eye that she is in love with you; and after your attentions to her, you are doing her a positive wrong, if she likes you and you do not propose. No true woman would think for an instant of the difference of fortune."

The night previous to that fixed upon for the friends departure had arrived. Dancing was in progress in the large saloon of the Ocean House. Virginia Surrey floated through the mazes of the waltz like a rose-colored cloud, as her light drapery fell in soft folds around her. Grayson had watched with some impatience, the zest with which she appeared to enter into the spirit of the scene, although he flattered himself that a sadder look than her bright face usually wore, occasionally shadowed it. It seemed too, as if the interminable German waltz would never end, and Fred's only consolation was that her partner was pretty little Fanny Butler, instead of some moustached foreigner. With the last strains of the music the girls slowly circled toward the door, and arm-in-arm passed out to the piazza.

"Your scarf, Miss Surrey, which your aunt requested me to bring," said Grayson, as he wrapped the soft folds of her camel's-hair around her, and offering an arm to each of the girls, he continued the promenade with them. But all Virginia's spirits seemed to have fled; her gaiety was forced; and the mercury in Fred's mental barometer rose higher in consequence, for he secretly believed that it was owing to his departure on the morrow. Miss Butler's partner for the next polka at last came to claim her hand, and Virginia withdrew her arm from Grayson's as if to follow.

"You are not engaged for this waltz too, are you?" asked Fred.

There was a moment's hesitation before she answered in the negative.

"It is very close in that crowded room, and there is no danger of your taking cold here, wrapped up as you are," said Grayson, as he turned for another promenade on the piazza. Still Virginia hesitated, and at last walked forward half reluctantly, and Fred grew more in love, if possible, than before, at this evidence of conscious love and maidenly modesty.

Half an hour had elapsed since the commencement of the promenade. Fred forgot that it was an heiress, whose white hand rested on his arm, and thought only of the woman who he so warmly loved. He poured an impassioned tale of doubts and hopes in her ear, and was not interrupted by a word or sigh. But had not his own excitement been so great, he might have felt the tumultuous beating of the heart which leaned next his arm.

"Yet I have nothing to offer you but willing industry and my great love, Virginia," concluded Grayson, as they emerged from the shadow into the full light of the bright September moon; but he did not see the workings of her averted face, nor the whiteness of the full lips as she murmured,

"I am already engaged."

For a moment he could not believe what he heard.

"Coquette," he hissed at last, as he flung her hand from him, and with a smothered curse turned away.

A quarter of an hour afterward Virginia Surrey was again floating through the mazes of the waltz, as calmly as usual, with no vestige of her late excitement, except a heightened color on her cheek; and as Fred passed the window, on his way to his room, and saw the nonchalante grace with which she received her fan from her partner, he vowed never again to put trust in woman.

#### CHAPTER IV.

FIVE years have elapsed since the commencement of our story. Frederic Grayson no longer lounges at his window on these bright summer mornings for the tripping school girls, nor gazes with a half absent air into the square for the coquettish nursery-maids. There is a less effort at show, and more reality of business than formerly; for "Grayson is a promising young lawyer, with a good deal more than ordinary talent, and he will be heard of yet, in the world," say the wise men, with a knowing shake of the head. And it is natural it should be so, for during those

winter twilights, the ruddy grate fire has conjured up no vision of woman's love and a quiet home, but through his half closed eyes, he has seen in the glowing embers triumphs in the Senate chamber, and his name written in proud characters beside the greatest of his land.

Grayson was sitting in his office one morning examining with a knitted brow some papers, when Jack Templeton walked in with all the ease of an *habitué*.

"You are busy, I see, Fred, and I haven't a minute to stay, but Lizzie is going to have a few friends this evening, and she says you *must* come. You are getting terribly uncousinly of late. Be sure you come, for——" but Jack hesitated, looked at Fred, and with a hasty nod left his sentence unfinished.

Fred was not the favorite in society he had formerly been. Young ladies and school girls thought him already old at thirty, and his sparkling wit, and gay repartee had become a myth in the drawing-room, to be expended with double force on his unlucky antagonist at the bar.

"Wait here a moment, Fred," said his cousin Lizzie, who had some years before become Mrs. John Templeton, laying a detaining hand on his arm, "I must hunt up a partner for Miss Lennox, and then I want you to come with me."

Fred had lately learned to regard himself a victim at parties, so he quietly awaited his cousin's return, thinking he had to entertain some dowager whilst her charge was dancing.

Mrs. Templeton returned in a short time, and taking Fred's arm, led him toward a table at the further end of the room. A tall, slender figure dressed in black, with her back toward them, was standing near looking at some engravings, and before Fred noticed whither he was going, Lizzie had said,

"Frederic, let me make you acquainted with my friend, Miss Surrey."

The half-constrained, half-expectant air with which the lady bowed, was answered by one as unconscious and indifferent as if they had never heard of each other before. Virginia Surrey had no cause now to taunt Fred with his unlawyer-like face, for it was as immovable as that of the sphinx. She could scarcely recognize the gay, dashing, rattling, Fred Grayson, in the grave, dignified man before her. The change was less striking in herself, there was more repose, to be sure, in the woman of twenty-three, than in the girl of eighteen; and any increased sedateness of manner could easily be accounted for by her black dress.

"You have been in Europe for some years, have you not, Miss Surrey?" queried her companion,

and unconsciously he kept repeating to himself, "Miss Surrey, Miss Surrey, I thought she was married."

But the conversation went on as calmly as if there was no under-current of feeling or surprise, and when after awhile others joined them at the table, Grayson arose and bowed as coolly as if she had only been the acquaintance of an hour.

"John told me that Virginia, and yourself had met at Newport," said Lizzie, half-deprecatingly, as she looked at Fred's impassible face.

"Yes," was the reply, "and she informed me then that she was engaged to be married. Was she jilted?" and the slight bitterness with which this was said, was the only betrayal of feeling.

"No," answered Lizzie, half-angrily. "Jilted! she was engaged to her cousin; a kind of family match, I believe, in order to keep her fortune among them, and she was very young and agreed to it; but the gentleman was very dissipated, so she broke the engagement, and I *did* hear that she payed all his debts. That was before she went to Europe. Her aunt and uncle have both died since then. She is in mourning yet for the latter, who died abroad."

Fred Grayson paced his room uneasily that night. Old sorrows, which he had thought dead and buried, arose from their graves. The old trouble was to be gone over again, for in no way could he excuse her coquetry with himself, even if she had not loved her cousin; and with a deeper sigh than he thought he could ever give to a woman again, Fred acknowledged that it would be with a hard struggle, that he should meet her at Templeton's, where she was to pass the winter with his cousin.

"Here, Fred, you are a lawyer, settle the difficulty," said Templeton, as Fred approached Lizzie's cosy centre-table one winter night, "Virginia has been defending coquetry; now I—"

"I do not see how she could do that," interrupted Fred, "except from practice."

Grayson had never told his friend of the *finale* of his visit to Newport, and when Jack heard from Lizzie of Virginia's engagement to her cousin, he congratulated himself that Fred had not taken his advice and proposed. It was, therefore, with some surprise that he heard the bitter tone in which his friend answered.

A troubled look and painful blush spread over Virginia's usually calm face, as she looked up hastily, and then answered, with her eyes cast down upon her work.

"I was not defending coquetry, Mr. Templeton, but I *do* think that many girls are thought-

lessly carried away by admiration, and are often *really* surprised when they find they were expected to be serious."

"But you were certainly defending Miss Lennox's flirtation with young Morgan, when she is engaged to Oliver," persisted Jack.

The smile and blush were both painful as Virginia answered, "*I was not* defending a flirtation, Mr. Templeton, but perhaps Miss Lennox loves Mr. Oliver. She is very young, and though it does not excuse her, I do not believe that she truly knows yet that she has got a heart—and—" here there was a waver in the voice, "the consciousness is sometimes a long while coming."

"Do you mean to say, Virginia, that a girl can be engaged to one man, and in love with another, and not know it?" asked Lizzie, who had never thought of loving any one but Jack Templeton, since she could remember.

There was a moment's hesitation. Grayson did not turn his head toward Miss Surrey, but he bent lower over the centre-table, and played unconsciously with his cousin's work.

The answer at last came huskily and painfully,

"Yes, Lizzie, I do think so. Of course it will be discovered, sooner or later, but an accident generally reveals it, and the shock is—must be terrible."

Grayson's breath came thick and fast at this answer, but he only twirled a thimble on the points of the scissors, then snipped off minute pieces of thread from the spools. Templeton gave a quick, curious glance at his friend and Virginia, and Lizzie, who felt there was something she could not quite understand, with all a woman's tact, quickly changed the conversation.

Fred sat but a short time longer, but both Miss Surrey and himself avoided looking at each other as he took his departure. With a disturbed brow he walked toward his lodgings. This revelation of woman's character was new to him, and sent his heart throbbing to joyous music, but the stern discipline of five years was too much for the hope, and he muttered between his set teeth, "a coquette still."

But the acquired serenity was broken up. Grayson watched Virginia's manner more closely than he had allowed himself to do, before that evening's conversation, and did not avoid his cousin's home circle as much as he had done, since Miss Surrey had become their guest.

The greatest snow that had been known for years was upon the ground. Fred sat gazing into his coal fire, dreaming as he was wont to do, when the merry jingle of bells, and the



sound of gay voices at his door, drew him to the window. Templeton was just emerging from piles of buffalo robes and Rob Roy shawls, as he espied his friend, and called out,

"Holloo, Fred, my boy, it's capital sleighing wrap up warmly and jump in; it's your last chance, for a thaw's coming."

The frosty air, the ringing bells, and champing horses exhilarated Fred in a moment, and wrapping a heavy cloak around him, he was soon seated by Jack's side.

The sunset clouds were throwing rosy hues over the white snow before Templeton ordered the coachman to return. As they approached the city, the wide avenue leading to it seemed crowded with sleighs. The greatest excitement prevailed everywhere. The sleek, fat horses that had dragged the family coach at a dozing pace for so many years, seemed suddenly to awake, and trot along as rapidly as their sense of dignity would permit; whilst the fast trotters, that drew the little cockle-shell things as if they were but a feather's weight, skimmed past like birds. Gay voices, jingling bells, and laughs that came on the cold air as if from very exuberance of spirits, made it the most exhilarating sight in the world.

For some time Jack had sat with his eye fixed on the coachman, and with a cautioning, "Not so fast, James," or "keep close to the right," he had satisfied himself. At last as he whispered to Fred, "the rascal is drunk, I believe. I shall take the lines myself," he prepared to reach over to the coachman's seat. But it was too late. The spirited horses had become maddened with excitement, and feeling a slack rein than usual, they had it all their own way. Away they went down the long street, dashing past everything, at lightning speed, increasing their pace at every new shout which rang out after them, from the sleighs behind, but guided by Jack's dexterous hand, which was yet unable to stop them.

Miss Surrey had watched all this with an anxious, but quiet face, taking in the probability of their running against anything they passed, with a mathematical eye, but never thinking of the snow-drift in which she was so unexpectedly lodged.

Then there came an unconsciousness, from which she was awakened by strong arms encircling her, and a wild whispered exclamation of "Virginia! Virginia! she's dead!" The blush, as rosy as that which lay upon the snow, and the effort to rise, were probably satisfactory answers to Fred Grayson, for with a hand which now trembled as much as her own, he assisted her

into the sleigh, which, with the help of some bystanders, was again ready for use.

No one was injured, except Virginia who was but momentarily stunned, and Templeton, taking his coachman's place, drove the now thoroughly subdued horses rapidly home.

Never had a case in court puzzled Frederic Grayson as did his own now, as he sat opposite Virginia Surrey during the remainder of the ride and watched her averted face and downcast eyes. At last his verdict with regard to her was "Not proven guilty," and feeling that he, at any rate, was compromised after his frightened whisper, whilst he thought her unconscious, he accepted Lizzie's invitation to take tea with them.

Templeton of course would not trust his horses to a drunken coachman, and his wife flew up stairs to her nursery duties as soon as she entered the house. Virginia went to the parlor, and after turning on the gas, was about to go up stairs when Fred laid his hand on her arm. There was perhaps more suspicion and pride than love in his voice, as he said,

"Virginia, it is due to you, after what occurred this afternoon, to again offer you my hand. Yet did I not hope and almost believe that you love me, I should not place myself a second time in your power. I am a richer man in prospects, though not in hopes and energies than I was five years ago. Will you accept me now, Virginia?"

The last sentence had lost all coldness, and the proud Frederic Grayson bent his head to gaze into the downcast face, then raised the small hand which was placed in his and kissed it, as Virginia whispered, "Yes."

There was a long silence. Then with tears in her eyes, Virginia said,

"Oh, Frederic, how could you be so unjust as you were? I had been engaged to my cousin since I was a school girl, and when I met you at Newport, I never suspected I thought of you except as an acquaintance, till I heard your avowal. I then knew that I had loved you all the time, without being conscious of it. I did not mean to coquette, indeed I did not."

The tears disappeared from Virginia eyes after this, Fred knew best how.

"But your cousin?" said Grayson.

"He had always been dissipated," was the reply, "and by relinquishing a part of my fortune to pay his debts, uncle Mason, at my earnest wish, after meeting you, persuaded him to consent to break the engagement. He is since dead."

There was another long, contented silence,

most eloquently understood by the two on the sofa. A curly head was presently thrust into the doorway, and after gazing with extended eyes, pattering feet were heard on the staircase, as a lisping voice called out,

“Oh, ma, ma, couthin Fwed kithed Jenny ever tho many timths. I thaw him.”

A loud peal of laughter from Templeton, who had entered the house through the yard, and a gentle, laughing reprimand from Lizzie to the incorrigible little Fred, made Virginia dart up

stairs, cloak and bonnet in hand, to be invisible till the tea bell rung.

From that time Fred Grayson was a popular man again. All his gaiety and wit returned, and although he thought no more about Senate chambers, we expect to hear of him there yet. As to Virginia, she was the same saucy, tantalizing piece she had formerly been, but vows that she would not have had a husband to this day, if Jack Templeton's coachman had not got intoxicated.

## THE FAITHFUL AMBROSE.

BY H. J. VERNON.

MADAME DE VARONNE was one of those who followed James the Second into exile. During the life of her husband she was in comfortable circumstances; but having become a widow, and being left without any protection, she had not sufficient interest to obtain from the court any part of the pension which her husband had enjoyed; she, however, wrote to the ministers and sent several petitions, to which they replied, that she must place her demand before the king. Thus for two years she buoyed herself up with hope. At length, having renewed her demands, she received so formal and so positive a refusal, that it was no longer possible to blind herself to her fate. Her situation was deplorable; she had been compelled to part in succession with her jewelry and part of her furniture; and there now remained for her no visible means of subsistence.

Madame de Varonne, shortly after the death of her husband, had dismissed all her servants, with the exception of the cook, one other maid, and Ambrose, the principal of all, who had lived with her for twenty years. At length the time came when she found it necessary to part with even these three. One day in the winter, Ambrose came into the room, and was about to place some wood on the fire, when Madame de Varonne said to him,

"Ambrose, do you know how much I owe the cook?"

"You owe nothing, madame, either to her, to Marie, or me. You paid us our wages yesterday."

"Ah, so much the better—I had forgotten. Well, Ambrose, you must tell the cook and Marie that I no longer require their services; and you, Ambrose, must also seek another place."

"Another place? and why? No; I will die in your service. I will never leave you, madame, whatever may happen."

"Ambrose, you do not know how I am situated."

"Madame, you do not know Ambrose. If they refuse you your pension, so that you have not the means of paying your servants, send away the others, but I do not deserve to be treated in the same manner; I am not mercenary."

"But, Ambrose, I am ruined, totally ruined. I have sold nearly all that I possessed, and they withhold my pension."

"Well," cried Ambrose, in a broken voice, "you shall not suffer; I can work."

"Ambrose," said madame, interrupting him, "I have never doubted your attachment, but I will not abuse it. This is what I wish you to do for me. Go and hire for me a small room on the fifth story; I have still a little money which will last two or three months. I will spin, find me some customers in St. Germain; this is all you can do for me."

While his mistress was speaking, Ambrose looked at her in silence; and when she had ended, fell at her feet.

"Ah! my honored mistress," he cried, "allow me to serve you to the end of your days. For twenty years you have clothed, fed, and made me happy. I have too often abused your patience and kindness; but if you will pardon all the faults which my bad temper has caused me to commit, I will endeavor, by God's help, to correct them."

He then arose, bathed in tears, and rushed from the room.

In a few minutes Ambrose returned, and placing a little leathern bag on the mantelpiece, said,

"Thanks to God, to you, and to my late master, I have here thirty louis. You gave me this money, and it belongs to you."

"Oh, Ambrose, it is the fruit of your twenty years' saving!"

"When you had money, madame, you gave it to me; now you have none, I restore it to you. I know that this small sum cannot last long; but listen to my plan for the future. You may remember, madame, that I am the son of a brazier, and I have not forgotten my father's trade. Well, now, I will work seriously."

Madame de Varonne, incapable of expressing her gratitude in words, answered only by her tears.

The next day the two female servants were dismissed.

Ambrose then hired in St. Germain a small but clean and airy room on the third story, and placed in it the small remains of furniture which

his mistress yet retained. To this room he conducted Madame de Varonne; she found there a good bed, a large and comfortable sofa, and a small table, on which was an inkstand and paper, above which were ranged her books on a small stand against the wall; a large chest, which contained her wardrobe, a quantity of thread for spinning, a silver plate, (for Ambrose would not allow her to eat off pewter) and the purse which contained the thirty louis. In a corner of the room behind the curtain was hidden the small earthen vessel in which madame was to cook.

"See," said Ambrose, "this is all I have been able to procure for the money you gave me—there is only one room; but the servant can sleep on a mattress, which is rolled up behind the bed."

"The servant, did you say?" cried Madame de Varonne.

"Certainly, madame; how can you do without a servant to cook for you, to run errands, to dress you?"

"But, Ambrose, consider."

"Oh, but this servant will not cost you much; she is only thirteen years old. You will give her no wages, and there will be plenty for her to eat from what you leave. For myself, I have made my arrangements. Nicault, a brazier, who is a very rich and good man, and my countryman, will allow me to sleep and take my meals in his home, which is only a step from hence, and he will give me twenty sous a day. Living is now very cheap in St. Germain; and so much the better, that we have a little ready money. I did not wish to tell you all this before Susanne, your new servant; but now I will go and fetch her."

Ambrose then went out, and soon returned with a pretty little girl, whom he presented to Madame de Varonne, saying,

"Here is the little girl of whom I told you, madame; her father and mother are poor, but industrious, and they have six children; and you will be doing a kind action if you will take this one into your service."

After this introduction, Ambrose, in a grave tone, exhorted Susanne to conduct herself well. He then went away to his friend Nicault's.

From this day there was a perceptible change in the conduct and manner of Ambrose—he did not appear to be the same person. His sullen temper and rough address had vanished, and he now behaved with respect and delicacy; he seemed to feel by instinct that no one can be truly generous who humiliates or embarrasses the person whom he seeks to oblige.

The day after Madame de Varonne had taken possession of her new dwelling, Ambrose remained

steadily at his work; but in the evening he came in, and begging madame to send Susanne away, he drew from his pocket twenty sous wrapped in paper, and placed them on the table, saying, "This is my day's wages."

Then, without waiting for a reply, he recalled Susanne, and went away.

After such a day's work, how peaceful should he sleep, and how sweet the waking!

Ambrose, faithful to the duties which he had imposed on himself, came every day to see Madame de Varonne, and placed with her the produce of his labor, only reserving, at the end of every month, the necessary sum for paying his washer-woman, and a few bottles of beer for Sundays and holidays; he did not even take this small sum as a right, but he asked it from Madame de Varonne as a gift.

In vain was madame much distressed at accepting so much from the generous Ambrose; in vain she represented that she could support herself on less. He either appeared not to hear her, or listened with such apparent pain, that she was compelled to be silent on the subject.

In the hope of procuring little more ready money for Ambrose, Madame de Varonne worked without ceasing at her spinning. Susanne helped her, and sold the work for her; but when Madame de Varonne exaggerated to Ambrose the sum she had gained from this little trade, he simply replied, "So much the better," and turned the conversation.

Time brought no change in his conduct; and during four years he never failed in a single particular.

At length the moment came when Madame de Varonne was to experience the most bitter grief. One evening, when she was expecting Ambrose, as usual, Nicault's servant entered her room. He came to tell her that Ambrose was ill, and was in bed. On hearing this, Madame de Varonne desired the servant to take her to Nicault's house, and sent Susan for a doctor. When she arrived, Nicault (who had never seen her before) was much astonished. She told him that she wished to be shown into Ambrose's room.

"But, madame, that is impossible."

"Why so?"

"You will have to mount a ladder to reach the loft."

"Mount a ladder? Oh, poor Ambrose, I will go; lead the way."

"But listen, madame. You will not be able to stand upright when you are there; Ambrose sleeps in such a small room."

At these words, Madame de Varonne burst into tears, and entreated Nicault to guide her.

He led her to the foot of a small ladder, which she had great trouble in mounting. She found Ambrose stretched on a mattress in a corner of the wretched loft.

"Ah! Ambrose, you told me that your lodging was a good one."

Ambrose was unable to reply to his mistress; for upwards of an hour his senses had been wandering.

Susanne at length returned with a doctor. This latter was much surprised, on entering the garret, to see so well-dressed a lady standing by the mattress of a poor brazier, and who appeared overwhelmed with grief. He approached the sick man, and examining him attentively, said, "That his aid had been called in too late."

Imagine the state of madame on hearing the fatal words!

"It is his own fault," said Nicault; "more than a week ago he was ill, and I wished him to leave his work, but he persisted in going on. The fact is," Nicault continued, "Ambrose undertook more work than he could manage, and that has killed him."

Every word struck a dagger into the heart of Madame de Varonne. Approaching the doctor, bathed in tears, and with clasped hands, she implored him not to leave Ambrose.

The doctor was a humane man; besides which, the peculiar circumstances of the case excited his curiosity, so that he was easily persuaded to pass part of the night with the sick man.

Madame de Varonne sent to her own house for some bed-clothing, and assisted Susanne to make up a bed for Ambrose, into which the doctor and Nicault carefully lifted him.

Madame then threw herself on a wooden bench, and gave free vent to her tears.

About four o'clock in the morning the doctor departed, having bled his patient, promising to return at noon. You may suppose that Madame de Varonne never quitted Ambrose for a moment; she passed forty-eight hours at his bedside without receiving the smallest hope from the doctor. At length, on the third day, there was an apparent change, and in the evening he was pronounced out of danger.

I will not attempt to describe Madame de Varonne's joy on seeing Ambrose so far recovered. She wished to watch by him that night; but as he was now perfectly sensible, he would not consent to it; she, therefore, returned home, overwhelmed with fatigue. The doctor came to see her the next day, and she felt so grateful to him for the care and attention which he had bestowed on Ambrose, that she was determined to gratify his curiosity by relating her history.

Three days after this conference the good doctor, who did not usually reside at St. Germain, returned to Paris, leaving Madame de Varonne quite well, and Ambrose convalescent. The former now, however, found herself in almost as destitute a condition as before. In a few days she had expended the little ready money which she possessed, with the exception of a few sous.

One evening, when she was occupied with her sad thoughts, Susanne entered breathless with haste, and told her that a lady wished to see her.

"It must be a mistake," said Madame de Varonne.

"No," said Susanne, "for she asked me, 'Does Madame de Varonne live here, in the third story above the court?' She is come in a carriage with six horses, and I answered her, 'It is here that she lives.' She replied, 'Will you ask Madame de Varonne to allow me to have a few minutes' conversation with her?'"

Just as Susanne had ceased speaking, they heard a gentle tap at the door, and on opening it a lady advanced with a graceful air. As soon as Susanne was gone, the stranger said, "I am charmed, madame, to be able to announce to you that the king has at length been informed of your situation, and he wishes to repair the injustice with which you have been treated."

"Oh, Ambrose!" cried Madame de Varonne, raising her eyes to heaven, with the most heartfelt expression of joy and gratitude.

At this expression of feeling the stranger appeared deeply moved, and taking her hand, said, "Come, madame, let me take you to the new apartments prepared for you."

"Ah, lady! if I dared I would ask permission. I have a benefactor; allow me to acquaint him with this joyful news."

"I will leave you at liberty to do so," said the lady, "and I will only conduct you to your carriage, which awaits at the door to take you to your new home."

"My carriage?"

"Yes, madame; but do not lose more time; let us go."

As she said this, she gave her arm to Madame de Varonne, who could hardly stand, and led her down the stairs. When they reached the door, the stranger said to a footman who was in attendance, "Call Madame de Varonne's servants."

The astonishment of the latter increased every moment; it seemed like a dream. Some servants dressed in grey livery approached a simple but elegant carriage. The lady accompanied her to the door, made Madame de Varonne enter it, and then proceeded to her own equipage.

Madame de Varonne's new servant then asked her where he should drive her to?

"To the house of Nicault, the brazier."

The first person she saw, on entering the shop, was Ambrose himself, still weak, but trying to work at his trade.

"Ambrose," she cried, joyfully, "follow me. Leave off work: you have no longer occasion to do it."

Ambrose, much astonished, in vain demanded an explanation, and begged to be allowed to change his working dress.

Madame de Varonne was not in a condition either to listen or reply. She seized his arm, and led him into the carriage.

When the servant asked, "Will you be driven to your new house, madame?" she started, and looking at Ambrose, said, "Yes, drive us to our house."

During the drive, Madame de Varonne told Ambrose of the visit she had received. He listened with joy, mingled with doubt, for he could hardly believe in such good fortune. At length the carriage stopped at the entrance of a pretty little house in St. Germain. They alighted, and went into a room, where they found the stranger awaiting them. She advanced toward Madame de Varonne, and gave her a paper, saying,

"Here, madame, is what the king has been pleased to present you with—it is an order for ten thousand pounds, and you are at liberty to give the half of it to any person you may wish to favor."

"Oh, how gracious of his majesty!" cried Madame de Varonne. "Here, then, lady, is the grateful, virtuous man, who is truly worthy of your protection, and the favor of his sovereign."

At these words Ambrose, who until now had concealed himself behind his mistress, came forward a few steps, with an embarrassed air; and in spite of his great joy, he was painfully confused on hearing himself praised in this manner; and he was vexed to appear before the lady at

his first interview in so dirty a condition, and without his wig.

The lady approached him. "Stop, Ambrose; let me look at you."

"Indeed, madame," he replied, lowering his head, "there is nothing wonderful in what I have done; it was but natural."

Here Madame de Varonne interrupted him, to relate with much ardor all that she owed to Ambrose.

The stranger was much affected with this recital. "Adieu, madame," she said, at length. "This house and all that it contains, belongs to you, and you will soon receive the first quarter of your pension." On saying this she retreated toward the door.

Hardly was she gone when the door reopened, and the physician to whom Ambrose owed his life entered. They rightly suspected that it was this good man who had told everything to the king. After having gratefully thanked him for his great kindness, they questioned him about the lady, and he replied, "that she was the queen, and that she lived at Versailles. For ten years I have been her doctor; I knew how benevolent she was, and I knew she would feel interested in your history. In short, as soon as she was acquainted with it, she bought this little house, and obtained from the king your pension."

As he finished this recital, a servant entered, and said that supper was served.

Madame de Varonne kept the doctor to this meal; and leaning on the arm of Ambrose, walked into the dining-room, and made the latter sit by her side.

The next day, Ambrose, as you may imagine, was dressed as became his new position. His apartment was furnished and arranged with as much care as taste, and Madame de Varonne shared with him all her life what she possessed; finally, she never received, or saw any money, that she did not recall the day when Ambrose brought her his twenty sous, saying, "This is my day's wages."

## A STORY FOR THANKSGIVING DAY.

BY MARY L. MEANY.

"To-morrow will be Thanksgiving Day!" said Mrs. Wilby, as she sat at breakfast with her husband and their only child. She spoke with an animation of look and tone that showed she felt a lively interest in the approaching festival; for this was the first time her native state had adopted the time-honored custom of New England, and it was no wonder that she shared in the general delight which the governor's proclamation had called forth. Little Frederic joyously repeated his mother's words, casting a bright glance to his father, who only replied moodily,

"I had forgotten it was so near—well, I suppose I'll have some trouble with the hands at the store; with several at least who seem inclined to nothing but folly and wasting their time."

"But, surely, you will suspend your business to-morrow?"

"Indeed I shall do no such thing," was the decided reply. "I have no idea of closing my store every time a governor chooses to proclaim a holiday."

"But this is the first time, Richard," said his wife, persuasively, "and one day in the year will not be a great loss."

"Not to those whose fortunes are made, and when my name is on their list perhaps I will be willing to observe Thanksgiving Day. At present, every dollar that goes into my pocket is gained only by toil of body or mind; very different is my situation from that of most of my neighbors, whose projects succeed almost before they are formed—to whom money seems to come almost as easily as the air they breathe. Thanksgiving is for *them*, not for poor toiling men like me."

"Oh, Richard, do not speak so!" said Mrs. Wilby, as she turned an appealing glance on her husband, and then on her child, a lovely boy with the bright glow of health on his cheeks, and the sparkle of intelligence in his dark eyes, "I know you strive very hard for every comfort we enjoy, but do not say or think, dear Richard, that we have no cause for Thanksgiving. If we had nothing else to call for our ceaseless gratitude, can we look at little Frederic and think of Mrs. Harper's child, just his age, gone from them forever? Surely we can never thank God as we

ought for having spared *our* dear one when sickness and death were all around us."

"A great deal depends on parents in this matter," replied Mr. Wilby, "if Mrs. Harper had been as careful of little Ella as you always are of Freddy, she need not now be mourning her death."

Mrs. Wilby did not think it proper to prolong the conversation, and in a few minutes after her husband repaired to his place of business, sternly resolved that no one in his employ should take part in the celebration of the morrow. In this mood he replied by a decisive "No, sir!" to the observation made by his head clerk, that he supposed the store would be closed during the next day. The young man looked surprised, but after a short silence said,

"Will it be requisite for me to come to-morrow, Mr. Wilby?"

"I shall be here as usual to attend to my business," was the reply, "and, of course, will expect all the hands to be at their work."

"At least, I hope you will not object to my attending Divine Service," said the clerk. "I had expected to have the entire day as a holiday, but if you deem it right for me to be here early in the morning and in the afternoon, of course I must come."

"No; if you absent yourself during any portion of the day, you can take the whole and every succeeding one. I can easily supply your place with one who will act as I wish."

John Eaton, although he had seen much of his employer's surly and ungenerous disposition, was yet surprised at this fresh instance of it. "Mr. Wilby," he began, but that gentleman angrily interrupted him.

"I tell you once for all, sir, that you or any one else in my employ who will not attend to business as usual, to-morrow, will be immediately discharged."

The clerk hazarded no farther remark.

Thanksgiving Day dawned brightly and beautifully. The whole population seemed resolved on a holiday, and with the merry chiming of church bells, and the gay and animated appearance of the crowded streets, it seemed that no heart unless deeply lacerated by affliction could resist the cheering influence of the glad scene.

But Mr. Wilby, the prosperous manufacturer, the man blessed beyond his deserts in every relation of life, walked moodily to and fro in his extensive establishment, where everything wore its usual aspect of bustling confusion, unmindful of the blessings showered upon his pathway, stubbornly refusing the small meed of public acknowledgment of gratitude to Him whose exhaustless mercies call for the adoring thankfulness of all His creatures, and especially of every one in our favored land.

Young Eaton had just been discharged. His employer had satisfied the promptings of a petty malice, and now he was tormented by the consciousness that he had acted most unwisely as regarded his own interest; for Eaton had been all that even his exacting nature could require in a clerk, and he had a misgiving that he would find it no easy matter to obtain one to fill the vacancy to his satisfaction.

And the young man as he walked slowly from the store, in which for five years he had been employed at a salary trifling indeed, yet of incalculable value to him, was oppressed with many gloomy forebodings. The dull season setting in—how unavailing would be the search for a place which he must now begin, and if he failed in getting a situation until the opening of spring, how were he and his widowed mother and young brother to live in the meantime, since it had taken his wages, and the trifle his mother could earn by needle-work, to maintain them in humble comfort hitherto? No wonder his cheek alternately flushed and faded as he thought of this; but he recalled the words of his truly Christian parent on the previous evening, when he informed her of Mr. Wilby's perverseness, which would prevent him from accompanying her to church as he had intended, adding, however, that as it could not be helped he must be satisfied, and there would be no harm in attending to his usual duties.

"There would be no evil in doing so indeed," said Mrs. Eaton, "but, my son, shall we do only that which the Lord positively enjoins, and which we cannot, therefore, neglect without detriment to our eternal interests? Ah, He has not dealt so with us! Has He not done all that Omnipotent love and wisdom could suggest for our benefit, and shall we refuse to make a little sacrifice, if need be, to prove our gratitude? Let us act generously toward our heavenly Father, John, and have no fear that he will forsake us."

A calm light shone in the widow's eye as she spoke, the light of *faith* in Him who had borne her safely through sorrows and trials; and as her son saw that trusting expression he cast from

him all doubt and disquietude, resolving to act as she desired. He recalled her words once more in the perturbation of feeling consequent on his discharge, and striving to banish his fear hurried on to his humble residence, where he found his mother and brother awaiting his return, and all three joined the throngs that were proceeding to the temples of religion. With sincere hearts all three paid their homage to one Lord of all, and when they next met around the dinner-table, on which Mrs. Eaton had placed a few little dainties that seemed luxuries in contrast with their accustomed fare, the mother and her sons conversed cheerfully together, and peace and joy dwelt in that lowly home.

How different was the scene at the amply-spread board of the Wilbys, to which the husband came with lowering brow, heedless of the innocent prattle of his child, while the wife tried, but in vain, to draw him into a pleasant conversation, till wearied at last, and hurt by his curt monosyllables or ill-natured remarks, she relapsed into silence. A shade rested on her fair brow too, for though she ought to have become accustomed to her husband's selfishness, so constantly was it displayed, still she was pained by every manifestation of it; and tears of wounded feeling had bedewed her cheeks that day as she took her place with little Frederic in the crowded church, where she saw many of his friends, all as much engaged in business as he; yet *they* had found time to join their families in the proper observation of the day. Thus, though she struggled against the hard thoughts that would arise, she could not at once regain her wonted cheerfulness, nor was the gloomy tenor of her feelings brightened by the information which Mr. Wilby gave her, toward the close of the repast, concerning John Eaton, for she foresaw that her husband would repent his angry haste; but to her gentle expostulation he replied that he could find plenty competent to fill the place of that obstinate fellow!

He did not find it so, however, for during the ensuing month three youths were successively engaged and discharged, the crowning offence of all being that they were unable to submit as patiently as he deemed proper to his exacting and tyrannical disposition. It was some satisfaction to him to know that during the same period young Eaton was vainly seeking a situation, and when they occasionally met in the street, though the vindictive man deigned not to notice his former assistant, he felt pleasure in observing his harassed and dispirited appearance.

"So much the better," he would say to himself,



"the next time he is well off he will not be so apt to act the fool." -

Perhaps he hoped that, worn out and despairing, the young man would eventually apply to be received once more into *his* employment, but in this he was disappointed; for at the opening of the New Year he heard that a rival firm had engaged John Eaton at nearly double the salary he had deemed himself liberal in giving. This news was torture to Wilby, and his natural moroseness increased through the combined effects of his angry feelings, and the real annoyances and perplexities he was daily subject to from the incompetence or carelessness of his clerks.

Poor Mrs. Wilby had frequent cause to regret the discharge of Eaton, for her husband was not one of those men who try to banish the every day annoyances of business from their minds, that they and their families may enjoy the sweet pleasure of social intercourse around the table or fireside; his usual topic on returning home was the misfortune or trouble he experienced through the day, and his wife's patience was taxed to the utmost in listening to his invectives and endeavoring to soothe his irritation.

On one such occasion—it was early in the autumn, the very day that the governor's proclamation of another Thanksgiving had given fresh cause for his ill-judged resentment, Mr. Wilby's attention was attracted by a sudden exclamation from his wife, who had taken up the evening paper in the hope of seeing something to change the current of his thoughts.

"What is it?" he asked, as he glanced over the paper; but a fierce oath sprang at the instant to his lips, for as if by intuition, his eye fell on the notice of John Eaton having been taken as junior partner into the prosperous and extensive establishment, in which for some months he had been faithfully performing the duties of his clerkship. Apart from his causeless hatred to Eaton, Mr. Wilby had a real dread of the consequences of this new partnership on his own interest—some of his best customers, with whom the attentive and obliging clerk had been a favorite, had followed him to the rival establishment, and Mr. Wilby had no doubt that others would be led thither through their example and influence. Did no internal monitor whisper, that his own blind passion had led to the results he deplored?

Again, the inhabitants of — welcomed the bright dawning of Thanksgiving day. At an early hour two gentlemen, acquaintances of Mr. Wilby, were walking down the principal business street.

"Wilby's store is not open to-day, I see," remarked one.

"It is yet early," was replied.

"Yes; but last Thanksgiving day his store was opened long before this hour; earlier, in fact, than it ever was before."

While they were speaking, a girl, whom they recognized as Mrs. Wilby's domestic, came hurriedly and in apparent agitation up the street. She paused before the store, and the persons who were carelessly observing her movements, were struck with awe when they saw her attaching a long, black crape to the door-knob. Both gentlemen looked on in silent surprise till the girl, wiping away her fast falling tears, proceeded to fasten the sable streamer with the pure white ribbon that denoted the flight of a young, sinless spirit to its native land. Then drawing near, one inquired in a subdued tone, what had occurred.

"Little Freddy," sobbed the girl, "our darling Freddy, is dead!"

"It must have been very sudden, I heard nothing of his sickness though I conversed with Mr. Wilby yesterday."

"Yesterday the dear child was as well as ever," sadly replied the girl; "last night he was taken with the croup, and now—now he is gone, and his poor mother is almost distracted."

"It is no wonder, poor woman! her only child, and so sudden a bereavement, too," replied the gentleman, as he and his companion passed slowly along.

And so it was—the bright, beautiful child was numbered with the silent dead—naught remained to the eyes of yearning tenderness but the little pulseless form that must soon be borne away to repose in the dust from which it came. It was a sad blow to the bereaved mother, whose greatest earthly happiness was derived from the love and endearing ways of that little one; but after the first wild burst of agony, she turned with a Christian's meek confidence to Him who woundeth but in love—the bitterness of her trial passed away, and though she must still grieve for her beloved one, her grief was tempered with resignation and hope.

Not so with the stern father. As he stood gazing on the peaceful brow of "his dead," no sweet voice spoke consolation to his grief-stricken soul. All the love his selfish nature could feel had been lavished on his child—in him his hopes were centred—now all was gone—and the worldly heart, that in the enjoyment of every blessing had stubbornly refused homage, or gratitude, or supplication to One mighty to save or destroy—where could it look for comfort in this trying

hour?—how gather support and consolation from  
the teachings of faith which it had slighted and  
contemned? } there are whose stubborn, wayward hearts can  
neither be ennobled by prosperity nor chastened  
by affliction!

Alas! for all such persons—for too many such

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## GENTLE WORDS.

BY L. WILLIAMS.

"Deal gently with the erring,  
For thou may'st lead them back  
By gentle words and tones of love,  
From misery's thorny track."

A SAD look was that which rested on the fair face of Kitty Mason, usually so bright and joyous, and a tear glistened like a dew-drop in the sun among the silken lashes that shaded either eye. Her fair, white forehead, around which the glossy, dark hair was arranged with exquisite taste, rested wearily on a hand of faultless proportions, in one of the fingers of which flashed a costly diamond circlet as the sunlight danced in and out of the window, playing "bo-peep" among the leaves of the jasmines that had crept in verdant net-work over it. Not long had Kitty been a bride. The cheek, usually tinged with the delicate hue of the rose, was flushed and hot, and the cherry lip quivered as with strong emotion.

She looked out at the open window, through the leafy screen, upon the fair face of nature, but its beauties had grown dim to her eyes, and pleased them not. The birds of spring chirped gaily in the branches of the maple, which shaded her cottage home, but their music fell like mockery on her soul. The bright sunshine spread its brightest folds on everything without, but a shadow, dark as the grave, had thrown its chilling mantle over her. The very hand of despair was toying with her heart-strings, and she felt the power of the soul-destroying god fast gaining the mastery of her being.

She pressed her hands on her aching brow, as if to still its throbbing, and walked the apartment with hurried steps.

"Oh, God!" burst in agony from her aching heart, "hast thou snatched the cup of happiness from my lips so soon, ere I had but tasted of its sweets, and given me one mixed with gall and wormwood? Oh, it is beyond my strength to bear. Father in heaven, if thou wilt but let this cup pass from me; if thou wilt turn the heart of my idolized husband to me again, give any other trial and I will not repine. Oh, I have loved him to distraction, perhaps, too well; and this is a punishment for my idolatry!"

She seated herself again by the window. The

light zephyrs of spring entering fanned her brow with their wings, and gradually a holy calm fell on her troubled feelings. She wandered back in spirit to other days. A graceful form of girlhood arose before her. The face was rosy with the hues of health and happiness; the eyes were sparkling with vivacity and glee; smiles dimpled around the cherry lips, and the lithe limbs swayed with every motion like the pendant branches of the willow. Her step was light and bounding as that of the young gazelle—the ringing laugh and gleeful words swelled up from the pure fountains of a heart overflowing with happiness; and when by chance sadness laid its shadows on her spirits, kind parents folded her to their hearts—their hands smoothed the glossy ringlets around her fair forehead, and cheered her with words of love.

But the scene changed. She saw that maiden again, but the form had ripened into the perfect woman. She was not alone as of yore in her rambles, but a manly form was by her side, and the strong arm of a beloved one supported her. Eyes beaming with love and tenderness poured their heart-light upon her, penetrating her soul, and filling her with joy unutterable. Low whispered words fell on her ear, speaking of joy and hope in the future; the future bright and sunny with not a cloud to mar the serenity of the peaceful heavens.

Days passed and another picture of this life panorama met her spirit's eye. She beheld the maiden stand before the altar beside her young heart's choice, to throw around them the flower-wreathed golden chain which was to link their souls in one. Then the parting came; the parting with parents, friends, home, and the thousand endeared spots which her young feet had trod, to go forth with one who now called her his own; to be the light of his home—the sharer of his happiness and sorrows. She saw the happy bride and wife, and months passed by without a speck on the smiling face of their heavens—but clouds at length began to gather on the far-off horizon, and the day of sorrow began to dawn.

She saw the husband led by the tempter to the wine-cup and card-table—she heard the reproaches of the high-spirited wife, and a breach grew wide between them.

All this passed in vision before her, and oh, how truly was her own life pictured in this her waking dream. She saw all, and for the first time a doubt arose within her, whether she had done all her duty. A light seemed to break in upon her, and she asked herself, "Have I sought with the gentle hand of love to lead him back from the wanderings in the path of misery?" Her stricken conscience answered, "No." She made a new resolve, and bending there before high heaven, she supplicated the Power Divine for wisdom and for gentleness, to lead her erring husband back to the ways of peace and happiness.

Night had thrown her starry mantle o'er the one-half world, and nature slept. A holy calm pervaded that May evening; the zephyrs, fragrant as the breath of angels, rustled the young leaves of spring, and the night-bird tuned its sweetest lay, singing on the still air. Charles Mason arose from the tea-table, and put on his hat as if to go

out, which of late had become his nightly custom, when a soft hand was laid on his arm, and the sweetest, and tenderest of voices whispered in his ear, "Dear Charles, must you go out to-night?" and a pair of eyes beaming with love, were turned beseechingly upon him. Charles was taken by surprise. He had expected harsh words and reproaches, and the unwonted voice of love fell on his ear. He gazed a moment at the face of his young wife, then he said kindly, "No, love, I do not have to go; I promised, but they can do without me;" and taking the hand of his wife in his, he led her to the sofa, and seated himself beside her. On that evening of spring, they linked anew that golden chain of love and harmony which had been well nigh broken by harshness and neglect.

With Charles it was a severe struggle to break from what had become almost a fixed habit, but his better nature was touched, and aided by the kind words of his loving wife, he achieved the victory. Gentle words had exerted their legitimate influence over the heart of the wayward husband, and led him from the soul-destroying paths of sin.

## WAIT.

BY F. H. STAUFFER.

The student toils in the lonely attic, wearing his life away with the midnight oil, poring over the books that

"Turn back the tide of ages to its head,  
And hoard the wisdom of the honored dead,"

hoping with the magic power of eloquence, the witchery of song, the vagaries of philosophy, or the voluminous flow of imagination, all as yet unsyllabled, undreamt of and unsung, to startle the world.

*Wait*—whispers the heart. He waits—unhonored and unnoticed. He labors, and toils, and despairs, and sinks to rest on the right arm of his strength, while an Alexander Smith, far less of a giant in intellect, fills all the heavens with his meteoric blaze.

The sculptor chisels at the uncouth stone—destroying and reproducing—encouraged and disheartened—oursing the visions of beauty that haunt his midnight hours, and which he would give the world to catch. The artist plies the pencil in his studio—blending the yielding colors—increasing and subduing the light—now a Titian in prospect—anon a Titconner in abject despair. The adventurer treads the mazes of the forest—parts the long prairie grass—gazes on the heretofore undiscovered river that stretches out its cool arm to the sleeping sea.

*Wait*—whispers hope and ambition. They wait. A Powers startles the world—a modern Tasso fills out his short cycle—and a De Soto, with his Eldorado dreams unrealized, while the torch-light flash upon the wavelets here and there, is lowered into the Mississippi.

*Wait*—says Love, as she toys with a deep, trusting heart. The early flowers open to the sweet May sun—the autumn nuts patter on the brown leaves—the holiday gayeties set in—the brooklets again burst their icy chains. Mist and shadow thicken as the seasons roll on—and a broken heart lies in the grave!

*Wait*—murmurs Faith to the dying Christian. His dark eye loses its lustre—his lips quiver—white-winged angels people the room—delicious strains float upon the ambient air—the silver spray from the fountain before the great, white throne, seems to fall upon his fevered brow—a short struggle and he is gone. He waited—long, and anxiously, and patiently. He suffered and was strong. His soul was refined by trial and tribulation—and while the rest who waited, and played like children with the sea-shells upon the beach of eternity, were swept away, one by one—lost upon the confines of a dim and hazy shore—he was at rest in that glory which was at times so dimly visioned to him, when he knelt in the quiet twilight in prayer!

## HOW THE DOCTOR WON HIS SUIT.

BY ELLA RODMAN.

STRANGE that the rich, June sun, which gilds the freshest and most beautiful of scenes, should also rise upon petty troubles and small afflictions—troubles which the tragedian passes by with as much contempt as men of war would regard an army of mosquitoes; and yet, in their small, stinging way, they are quite as annoying.

The sun, on this particular June morning, shone on the noble trees and extensive building of Peach Vale—which name always rightly suggested delicious loads of blushing fruit; but, alas! it was now without the useful machinery of servants, every one, except the coachman, having taken it into their heads to depart—and go they did, leaving the two ladies in a dilemma from which extrication seemed impossible. "The two ladies" in question were the sisters of Mr. Edward Markwald, the owner of Peach Vale, and both very charming in their different styles.

Mrs. Clenholme, the eldest, was very fair and languid-looking, with a die-away expression in her drooping eyes that had been pronounced "very taking;" any exertion beyond that of turning her diamonds to the light, and arranging the numerous bracelets on those statuary-looking arms of hers, always "completely unnerved her;" so, she threw handsome shawls over her shoulders, and played picture—looking with immense disdain on those unfortunates whose lack of charms obliged them to resort to *animation*. Mr. Clenholme was a person with no particular characteristic save that of wealth; and, as he was quite overshadowed by his splendid wife, people often mentioned them as "*Mrs.* and Mr. Clenholme."

Susan Markwald was a pretty brunette, with sufficient animation in her dark eyes to contradict her usual expression of indolence. She had always been petted, ever since she could remember; and the grave, elderly brother, for whom she performed the nominal office of housekeeper, was quite disposed to indulge her to the fullest extent. Susan was extremely independent, and received a great deal of admiration without troubling herself in the least about it; her brother's well known wealth, of which it was supposed that she would, eventually, become possessor, and her own charms were quite sufficient.

But all the relations were as much troubled that Susan should have reached the age of twenty

in a state of single blessedness as though there had been something highly improper in it. Grandma had almost ceased to reiterate the fact that "*she* was married at seventeen"—mournfully reflecting that it was out of Susan's power to emulate so bright an example; aunts and uncles wondered when Susan *would* settle; and the elegant Clarice, the languid proprietress of Paul Clenholme and his money-bags, read her lectures innumerable upon the subject.

But every candidate who seemed at all in earnest for the honor of Susan's hand, was treated by them all much as his attendants treated the dishes served up to the Governor of Barataria—there was always some excellent reason why she should not take any; and Mrs. Clarice had set her heart upon so splendid a match, that it seemed more than doubtful if any one ever appeared whom she would consider worthy of her approval.

So matters stood on the morning in question; when the fragrant June air, that breathed around the precincts of Peach Vale, was rudely disturbed by the indignant tones of Biddy, the cook, who tramped down the avenue, calling loudly for "the perlice," and vowing vengeance on Susan, who had declined paying the lady a month's wages, which she had not earned.

But Biddy, whose perceptions were not remarkably clear, evidently considered herself entitled to a reward for going off without any warning; and she informed the birds of her numerous wrongs in a voice which sent the frightened warblers back to their nests. The great gate closed with a bang—a red shawl fluttering in the breeze, like a signal of distress, was the last sign of Biddy—and Peach Vale was cookless, chambermaidless and waitressless. Their only hope was Thomas, and his ideas were closed to every subject but horses.

Here was a situation for the mistress of Peach Vale! A place that had an undisputed right to hang out a sign of "Free Entertainment for Man and Beast;" for not a day passed but that the hospitable owner brought home several friends to admire his retreat.

Mrs. Clenholme sank into despair, which she probably imagined somewhere in the depths of a well-cushioned sofa; and Susan laughed.

"Only to think!" exclaimed Clarice, drawing

forth her richly ornamented vinaigrette, "there is that splendid fellow, Eustace Radworth, coming to-day, and what *are* we to do for dinner?"

"Give him a rural feast of strawberries and cream," observed Susan. "We could spread it under the trees, garnish it with flowers, and call it a fete champetre. As he is such an experienced traveller, he will appreciate originality."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed her sister, angrily. "I do *wish* you would have a little sense, Susan! You seem to forget that this man is one of the most splendid matches in the United States."

"I don't care whether he is or not," rejoined Susan. "I don't see any reason why I should take the trouble to cook him up a dinner. What we *are* to do, though," she added, laughing, "is more than I can imagine. *Of course*, Thomas must pitch upon to-day to march off several miles about that mysterious hay business. I find that he had commenced his journey when the revolt in the kitchen took place—we shall not see *him* again until nightfall. Biddy has taken good care to leave no water, no wood, no anything at all—*dirt* being the only article in which she has manifested any degree of generosity. There is no help for it, Clarice—Marie Antoinette and her court played at shepherdesses and villagers, and we shall have to play cook and waiter."

"Don't speak of it!" exclaimed her sister, nestling down among the cushions with the expression of a tragic-queen.

Susan laughed at the unaffected start of horror extorted at the idea of *work*, and saw that she need expect no help in *that* quarter; while Mrs. Clenholme closed her eyes, and wished in vain for the wings of a dove that she might fly away to Newport. This visiting one's relations in the country had its disadvantages.

"Now," exclaimed Susan, who had been quiet for a remarkable length of time, "as it is decidedly disagreeable to find oneself, in the kitchen, monarch of all one surveys, I intend to extract from the day's misfortune as much amusement as possible—and all that I ask of you, lady-sister mine, is that you will not expose my acting. I intend to have a little comedy, and try the various beaux who make their appearance."

"I do not approve of such plots," said Mrs. Clenholme, grandly, "they are decidedly vulgar."

"Vulgar, or not vulgar," rejoined Susan, "I do not intend to be won by a man who is capable of being dazzled by wealth—and as you are all so anxious to get rid of me, it is but fair that I should have some co-operation in my scheme for going off."

After a short absence, Susan returned to her sister; but, instead of being armed with a receipt-book, and a nice, white apron, suitable for kitchen work, she carried two novels, one of which she handed Clarice, saying:

"I intend to make the visitors do the work."

Mrs. Clenholme opened very widely a pair of charming eyes; but as she considered it decidedly Yankee-ish to ask questions, she was soon deep in the pages of "Shirley."

The morning hours sped swiftly on—the locusts hummed in the trees around Peach Vale—and undisturbed quiet reigned within.

The first visitor was Doctor Cleftwood, who always came early.

The doctor was a tall, fine-looking man, an excellent physician, with an extensive practice in a neighboring town; but very young ladies were impertinent enough to term him "elderly," and bolder men were very apt to push him in the background. He was rather shy of ladies' society; but he had followed our pretty friend, Susan, with a hopeful perseverance that was certainly deserving of success; and when she gave him a gentle refusal, he mournfully requested to be still regarded as a friend.

Susan had thought considerably on the subject *since*, and wondered why she could not like him better; but her brother declared that the doctor was too old and grave for her—Mrs. Clenholme scorned the idea of Susan's making such a hum-drum match—and the other relations, having frowned upon so many, had now quite got in the way of it, and considered it their duty to frighten away all candidates.

So, the doctor came the same as ever, and, as he stood there, fastening his horse to a tree, his hand shook nervously at the idea of seeing her whose face was mingled with all his thoughts—whose words at their last meeting could have been accurately repeated at the next.

A brighter color came into Susan's cheek, as the doctor walked hesitatingly up the avenue, with the air of a man half doubtful of his reception; and she glanced at the folds of her white dress, and at the white rose on her bosom, as though anxious that all should be right; and then she rose, half-trembling, to receive the visitor.

Mrs. Clenholme's salutation was as though she had concluded to rise from the sofa and then thought better of it, and attempted to bow and thought better of *that*; for, having done neither one nor the other, she sank languidly back again.

"Doctor," said Susan, with a merry laugh, "do you not pity us? we have no servant."

"No servant!" he repeated, in a tone of the utmost concern. "Is it possible! Is there no way in which I can serve you? Do let me go to town and look for some."

"No, I thank you," replied Susan, with an attempt at embarrassment, "my brother will arrange these things to suit himself. We have been rather unfortunate, lately—but I will explain nothing, *now*," she added, "and if you will come into the kitchen and shell some peas, you will really do me a very great favor."

"With the utmost pleasure, my dear Miss Susan!" exclaimed the doctor, seeming to put his whole heart into what he said; and, springing from his seat with the greatest alacrity, he followed his fair taskmistress into the kitchen.

Mrs. Clenholme was surprised beyond expression, but her look of inquiry was only answered by the archest of smiles from Susan; and, having established Doctor Cleftwood on one side of a wooden table, with a tin pan and a pile of peas before him, the young lady seated herself demurely on the other with a corresponding pile.

For some time no sound was heard save the rattling of the peas; but, at length, the eyes of the workers met, and both laughed.

"Why, Miss Susan," observed the doctor, "you shell as dexterously as though you had always been used to it!"

"It is well to adapt oneself so soon to circumstances," replied Susan, gravely, "I may have harder work than this."

At the mention of hard work, the doctor glanced at the small, beautifully moulded hands that gleamed so whitely among the pea-pods, and his eyes repeated the offer he had made before; but Susan would see nothing of the kind as she shelled away with renewed vigor.

At length, the peas were ready for the pot; but there was no water for the peas, and no fire to heat the water—so, the doctor was despatched in quest of both. He looked supremely happy to be employed under Susan's direction; and the culinary department was progressing finely, when another "help" arrived,

This was a pretty-looking young man, who giggled as decidedly as any girl, and who indulged in a stream of small talk as monotonous as the roaring of the surf. "Mr. William Patterson," he called himself—"Billy" was the undignified soubriquet bestowed upon him by society in general.

Having once established himself in any house, as a visitor, he seemed to take firm root there, and to defy all attempts at expulsion; but those upon whom he thus fastened himself took good care to make him as useful as possible. Young

ladies thought nothing of sending him out on commissions to buy sewing-silk, and all sorts of small wares; but, after being allowed to dance attendance upon them for an indefinite period, had Billy asked any of them "what their intentions were," they would have been extremely astonished. As to Billy's having any intentions of his own, the idea never entered their heads.

Notwithstanding the unflattering light in which he was received, the young gentleman was quite apt to boast of his conquests; but as he was useful and good-natured, people were willing to put up with him, and only alluded to these revelations as "some of Billy's stories."

Mr. Patterson affected great fastidiousness in the choice of a wife; but, at Susan's feet, he struck his colors in surrender, and, having considered her various advantages, decided, that she was in every way worthy of him. Susan had, to be sure, pronounced a very emphatic "no" to his presumptuous offer; but, as he intended to make several more, this troubled him very little.

On excellent terms with himself, and the world generally, he now arrived upon the scene of action; and Susan, without the least feeling of remorse, immediately gave him the cloth to lay for dinner.

Billy was rather staggered, at first, by the lady's implied poverty; but Susan looked so pretty and animated, as she issued her orders, and the doctor's undisguised admiration so excited his jealousy, that he magnanimously resolved to waive that consideration, and try again for the prize.

The doctor and Billy were both industriously at work, when a superb-looking individual came sauntering up the avenue, as if impressed with the conviction that it required a great many improvements to be good enough for him to walk in. This was Eustace Radworth, Esq.—the brilliant drawing-room illumination before whom all other lights paled—the man who had travelled in all quarters of the globe—and whose chief recreation seemed to be that of despising everything he saw!

A pair of intensely black eyes gleamed out from a mass of black hair, like those of a cat in the dark; and a mysterious aperture, as much concealed as those hidden entrances in the Arabian Nights, now and then opened to display interminable quantities of splendid teeth, through which issued a voice self-opinionated in the extreme.

Mrs. Clenholme was nervously agitated at the state of affairs, when she beheld the pompous Mr. Radworth; and that gentleman evidently



considered that he was conceding when he seated himself at her request.

Susan returned his greeting with perfect composure; and, inwardly pronouncing him "detestible," went back to her assistants.

Dr. Cleftwood had very moderate ideas of happiness, for he felt very sorry to think that the dinner would, at some period of the day, be finished; and Susan flitted around with a brighter face than usual.

Last of all, "brother Edward" made his appearance; and, having shaken her head at her sister, and made a great many Masonic signs, Susan beguiled the gentleman of the house into a retired spot, and so seduced him with her eloquence, that he promised to swear to all she might choose to tell.

Dinner was soon announced; and Mr. Radworth felt considerable contempt for his entertainer's cuisine when he beheld the simple shoulder of lamb, and green peas, with which the table was set forth.

"Our servants left us very suddenly," said Mrs. Clenholme, apologetically, "and, in the country, it is not easy to supply their place."

Mr. Radworth made no answering remark, but treated the company to a Barmecide feast, in which he warmed up the soups and fricacees of Paris with so much enthusiasm, that Susan felt not at all concerned at his want of appetite for the dinner before him. Such a mind was a continual feast.

Mr. Patterson, having discovered a white apron belonging to the last waiter, had chosen to discard his coat and adorn himself with it—fully confident that he possessed l'air distingue which could not be mistaken, even in a servant's garb; but Mr. Radworth, whether purposely or not Susan had her suspicions, ordered him about as though he had been the genuine article, and invariably misunderstood all explanations. Poor Billy found his office no sinecure; and was placed in so ridiculous a position that the company could scarcely restrain their laughter.

After dinner, those who were inclined strolled through the grounds; and Susan most unwillingly found herself paired with Mr. Radworth.

"This must be excessively unpleasant," observed the travelled man, referring to the departure of the servants; "now, in *Paris*, one is not subject to anything of *that sort*."

"Paris and America are different places," replied Susan, with a smile; "but in *any* place, servants expect to be *paid*—and, if my brother is not able to support so expensive an establishment, I am perfectly willing to reduce it."

Mr. Radworth looked at the speaker in sur-

prise. Mr. Markwald's wealth had been his chief inducement for the trouble of paying a visit to Peach Vale; and, if this had taken to itself wings and flown away, the sooner that he followed suit the better. He entertained a perfect horror of an active, enterprising American girl; Mrs. Clenholme suited his fancies much better; and wishing that she were single, with an income of twenty thousand, Mr. Radworth took his departure.

Her sister was seriously angry, and upbraided her in no measured terms; but her brother declared that she was perfectly in the right of it, and he was glad that the fellow had been dismissed; and Susan turned to the doctor with a light in her eye that almost put hope in *his* timid nature.

Mr. Patterson had also taken his departure—his dignity had been seriously ruffled; but Dr. Cleftwood stayed to get tea. He and Susan had a charming moonlight ramble down the old avenue of elms; and, when they returned, the rose that had bloomed on Susan's bosom was transferred to the button-hole of her companion.

"He could not help it—he had not meant," he said, "to tire her with his unwelcome suit again—but, perhaps, her brother's misfortunes might have troubled *her*—and, so——"

But Susan looked up at him with a smile that thrilled through his heart; and, leaning her hand on his shoulder, as though it were a most natural resting-place, she laughed, as she told that their only "misfortune" was the faithlessness of their servants.

And the two walked on, as though they feared it was all a dream which a return to the house might break; but "brother Edward" came quite unexpectedly upon them, to the embarrassment of both parties; when, finding that he could not pretend not to see it, he wrung the doctor's hand, and declared that he was the only one who really deserved Susan.

Mrs. Clenholme was inconsolate, and bewailed Susan's fate as though she had been bewitched by some Othello; but her sister would laughingly tell her that, with such a husband, servants might act as they pleased—she would never be obliged to get dinner.

The relations said "they had always prophesied that Susan would go through the field, and pick up a crooked stick at last; and they were very certain that, if she had taken *their* advice, she might have done better."

Mr. Radworth, having repented his haste when too late, kept up his search for a fortune until he found himself linked to a wife with an income

of twenty thousand a year, whom he was ashamed  
to introduce anywhere.

and contented, with Susan beside him; and  
wished in vain that he had possessed that gentle-  
man's talent for shelling peas.

He often passed the doctor, looking so proud

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## ORPHAN MARGY.

BY MRS. M. A. DENISON.

"I wish you was with your mother."

Such was the exclamation of a cross, tired-looking woman, as she snatched a bit of choice work from a little hand, and then rudely pushing the child from her side, she left the room.

It was not a beautiful creature, that little wan child, with golden ringlets and soft, deep blue eyes. Neither was her complexion dazzling, nor her cheeks round and flushed with rich bloom. She was only a poor, plain, common-looking child, whom nobody ever called sweet names and gave loving kisses to, save the sainted mother over whose ashes the mould gathered now.

Quietly the little one moved away—but great, gasping sobs swelled her bosom, and she breathed hard as if it were a misery and weariness to breathe at all.

"I wish I was with my mother—oh! don't I wish I was with my mother?" she said again and again, holding her little hands tightly clenched upon her breast. "If I was only up there," she sobbed, pitifully, "my head wouldn't beat so, and my eyes be so red and aching. Oh! God, take me—take up there with my mother."

Never was uttered a more fervent prayer, and—it was answered.

"Mother says if you're sick and can't do nothing, you'd better go to bed. She says you mustn't eat no supper, because sick folks ought not to eat nothing. She says it's light enough to see without a candle."

Upon receiving this message, orphan Margy groped her way through the long dark passage, and entering a small and poor room, threw herself on the bed.

Her strength was exhausted by the heavy tasks that had been imposed on her during the day; and her head ached so violently that it seemed to her it shook with the pain.

She had almost sobbed herself to sleep when a little figure stole in, holding in one hand a slice of nicely buttered bread, and in the other a feeble light.

"Margy," it said, "Margy, Ann told me that you had to go to bed sick, without any supper. Ain't you hungry? Here's something for you to eat."

Margy sprang wildly up, her eyes glittering and a crimson circle on each cheek. Fever was

coursing through all her veins; she was, for the moment, bewildered, and gazed round her so strangely that the little figure shrank back further in the gloom.

"Oh! I wish my mother was alive," she exclaimed, solemnly. "Elly, you don't know how I feel. I couldn't eat it," she added, as the child stretched out its little offering; "I feel as if I never should eat anything again—something going round and round inside my heart as if I was flying."

"There! I feel better now," she said, after a few heavy gasps; "but oh, Ella, do you know I think I am going to die?"

"What makes you?" asked the little girl, coming nearer and lying her hand upon Margy's, "how queer and white you look!"

"Aunt told me to-night," said the sick child, "that she wished I was with my mother—and then I prayed to God that he would take me to heaven—and—I think he will; to-night maybe."

"Oh! Margy!" exclaimed Ella, bursting into tears, and sobbing as if her heart would break, "I'm really sorry I struck you yesterday, and we've all been cross to you. I heard mother say it, and I saw her push you, and it made me feel bad; oh! Margy, don't say you're going to die, and we'll all be good to you; don't die, Margy. Do eat this bit of bread."

The child shook her head. "Aunt didn't mean to be cross, I guess, or say what made me feel so bad," said Margy, in a weak voice; "I don't feel a bit bad about it now, though I think my heart almost broke then. And you was so kind to think of me, too, dear. I'll tell of it, be sure, in heaven, and God will bless you, I know he will. And now you're cold and shivering, while I'm, oh!—all burning up. You must go to the fire again, only help me undress, because maybe aunt won't like it if I sleep in these clothes. Good night—stop, kiss me, Elly, maybe I'll never kiss you again."

Elly stooped down and impulsively flung her arm about Margy's neck. It felt burning hot—so did her lips and her breath; but when the child told in the warm kitchen that Margy thought she should die that night, her mother laughed derisively, saying, "the child must be broken of such nervous notions. If she had come to her sooner, she would have made some-

thing of her—but sister with her refined notions had utterly ruined her, adding, “I rather think she’ll come in to breakfast in the morning; we shan’t save any on her dying this year.”

Slowly the sad hours crept along, and twelve had long ago struck from the old clock in the corner, when little Margy sprang again from a troubled sleep. The moon shone in full and white; its light struck out all the little objects of interest from the dark wall—her mother’s furniture—a dingy portrait, and a high-backed chair with a white sheet thrown over it. She was now in a raging fever, and on the very verge of delirium. She threw aside the coverlid that almost scorched her, and the keen night air seemed grateful to her.

She had waked from a dream—a glorious dream of heaven, the angels and her mother. She had heard silvery accents, sweetly singing out from some beautiful golden arch, “Come, little Margy, come where your mother is.”

“And where is my mother?” she thought, closing her eyes for a moment; “she called me. I surely heard her—I saw her. Where shall I go? to the cold church-yard? Where shall I go to find my mother? tell me, dear Jesus.”

Another moment; she had flung her long hair back from her eyes—sought the door, and was gone. None saw her in her flight, save the kindly moon that looked down pityingly. The frost glittered on the hedges, the bare trees shook their lifeless branches above her head. Many a watcher sat in the pleasant cottages—some of joy, some of grief; but they knew not that the motherless child fled almost on the wings of the wind, past their joy and sorrow—past warm and pleasant homes, past groups of little children snugly sleeping, with their arms twined round each other’s necks—past loving, living parents—that poor motherless child, flying to the cold bed in the church-yard.

Her feet left prints in the frozen dew—she felt not the chill, but with her wildly bright eyes measured the shining stars that glittered between her and the heaven she sought. The church-yard wall gained, she glided by, found the little cross-bars at the entrance, and passed them. In her night robes, gliding among the grey headstones, she looked like a spectre, wan and white.

At length she found the sad spot where last

she had seen the brow of her gentle mother upturned to the pale sunlight.

There she sank down as she shouted, “I have come, mother; I have come, mother;” and then she would gaze and listen, while the crimson fever spots faded into white on her cheeks. Presently she fancied that she was again in her childhood’s home, and sweetly and lovingly she talked with her mother, twining her arms as if about her neck, imploring in plaintive accents that she would not leave her.

The lightest breeze made her frame tremble now, for the fever of her delirium was passing away, though not the fancy that she was in her own dear home. Still she babbled of little childish things, and feeling weary, murmured that she would go to bed.

Oh! it would, it would have been a touching sight, even to the heartless, to see that motherless child stretch out her little limbs on the cold grave. To hear her murmur as her parched lips parted so faintly and slightly, “Good night, mother! I’m going to sleep, now, and if I die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.”

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All was confusion in the family where orphan Margy had suffered so much and so bravely. The children went about weeping—the father had gone to the orier’s, but meanwhile, two men came to the cottage, bearing the body of the dead child.

Horror-stricken the conscious woman who had treated her tender charge thus harshly, moved hurriedly away from the little body, muttering vaguely, “found—found—found in the death sleep. Found with her little hands clasped—her limbs stiff—her lips bloodless—her heart still. Found, and—dead.”

The children pressed about the little white form with bitter grief—but the parents stood aloof, henceforth never to know peace.

“I wish you was with your mother!” Oh! how those thrilling words rang through her brain. Dear lamb! she was with her mother—no more to bear wrong and insult. From the church-yard her patient spirit went up; and it was an angel warning, that pressed from her heart the prophetic words—

“Oh! Ella, do you know I think I am going to die?”

## A ROMANCE

### FROM THE LIFE OF A NAVAL OFFICER.

BY E. W. DEWEES.

I was yet very young when the United States man-of-war *Scorpion* (on board of which I held the rank of past midshipman) anchored off Havana.

Not that I knew much about it, for a sicker man than I was at that time, was never tossed about on the restless ocean waters. A raging fever was upon me, and in my delirium, each motion of the vessel roused new and frightful fancies. I should not like to have to recall, or recount all the wild dreams which then racked my troubled brain. Enough that my life was despaired of, and I should doubtless have lost it but for the generous hospitality of a noble Cuban gentleman who befriended me.

General de Castro, a Spanish nobleman by birth, was possessed of immense wealth, and lived in a style commensurate with his fortune. His house, in the neighborhood of Havana, was a palace; his grounds regal.

Agreeably to the customs of the South, he delighted in a boundless hospitality.

Having heard of my illness through my brother officers, he immediately caused me to be conveyed to his residence; physicians were sent for, and no care or expense spared to ensure my recovery.

His assiduities saved me.

A few days after my advent to his friendly mansion consciousness returned; and no poor rascal in the fairy tales, lying down in misery, and waking in some palace of bliss, was ever more bewildered than I, when I began to notice my surroundings.

Instead of my comfortless berth, and the dark, narrow quarters of ship-board, I found myself on an ample bed of softest down, round which curtains of silken net were wreathed. Through the delicate drapery I could discern vases of rare flowers decking the spacious apartment. The light, but rich furniture—the pictures and statues, the gleaming mirrors, made it like some scene in the *Arabian Nights*.

I raised myself on my elbow to convince myself it was no dream; and the better to gaze around, I put forth my arm to push aside the curtain. As I did so, I felt my hand taken within one, whose soft touch thrilled while it startled me. At the same moment a young and handsome

woman bent over me, and chiding me for exerting myself, pressed me back with gentle force upon my pillows.

I gazed a moment in some bewilderment upon the face of my beautiful nurse, and then, overcome by a heavy languor, sunk back again to my half delirious dreams.

I dreamt that I was upon the sea-shore, and lay bound hand and foot to a rock, where the merciless waves dashed over me at every surge, and fishes and slimy creatures from the deep came and gnawed me. I writhed and groaned, but could in no way help myself.

At last there appeared above the water, at no great distance, the form of a woman of surpassing loveliness. Hearing my complaints she approached, and bending over me, cast upon me her piercing black eyes—lustrous and beautiful, yet fearful to look upon in their superhuman brightness. Like one spell-bound, I could not withdraw my gaze from her unearthly beauty. Her keen, unflinching eyes, her floating hair—her flashing white teeth, and voluptuous form riveted my whole attention.

Suddenly she spread her arms and clasped me within them. My hands snapped like pack-thread, and I thought myself free. But no; the embrace of the mermaid grew ever closer; it stifled me—I felt a serpent-like form gathering my limbs in its folds, and drawing me below the water. I now perceived with horror, that instead of being in a beautiful woman's arms, a hideous serpent had me in its coils. Yet still, in the monster's countenance I recognized those same piercing black eyes, and, strange to say, the same flashing, white, human teeth.

One moment I noticed these things as one can even at such times—the next I felt the waves whelming over my head, and as I was torn downward, I felt those sharp teeth sinking into my very heart. I uttered a fearful cry of pain and horror, and woke to find my tender nurse bending over me, and seeking to rouse me from my frightful dream.

Her hand was still within mine, for so I had fallen asleep, and doubtless she had feared to disturb me by removing it.

As I encountered, in waking, the dark, lustrous

eyes which were bent upon me, I perceived it was of them I had been dreaming, and I blushed at my ingratitude in having thus, even in my dreams, associated my benefactress with so frightful a monster.

A few days later found me so far restored to health, as to be able to sit in an easy-chair by the open verandah, listening to the conversation of my handsome and entertaining nurse.

I learned from her how I came to be where I found myself, and something too of the family whose generous hospitality had saved my life. With my host I had also become personally acquainted, for he made very frequent visits to my sick room. Always refined, cordial, and cheerful, I found him a most delightful companion, and I soon learned to entertain love as well as gratitude for him. Once or twice I heard casual mention of the general's daughter, but I saw nothing of her. I was most interested in the history of my nurse. She was a younger sister of the general's and already a widow.

The many hours of unrestrained intercourse which the room of a convalescent allows, are extremely conducive to the speedy formation of an intimacy, and, therefore, I thought it not strange to find myself ere long becoming the confidant of Signora Marie's former domestic sorrows. She told me how, wedded to a man of a base and cruel nature, she had been subjected to the most humiliating insults and brutality. She hung her head and blushed, but to recount the indignities she had suffered.

I was deeply interested in her sad story; what man of any feeling would have been otherwise? Every fortuitous circumstance, at this time, seemed favoring to the formation of an attachment between Donna Marie and myself. I was constantly in her society—I found her handsome, fascinating, and unhappy; nor could I forget that I owed her a heavy debt of gratitude, for the care she had bestowed on me. But what was far more, her every look, tone, and action, tended to reveal to me that high-born and beautiful as she was, she was not indifferent to the poor youth whose life she had saved.

A man is ever flattered by thinking a woman loves him—a young man is *especially* flattered by having won the regard of a woman older than himself, and Marie was by about two years my senior; yet, notwithstanding so many propitious circumstances, strange to say, my wayward heart refused to respond to the passion I could not but perceive I had awakened. Perhaps for this very reason, I sought all the more zealously to express to my benefactress my devotion and gratitude.

My health rapidly improving, I began to grow impatient of the restraints of confinement, and more than once essayed to free myself. But Marie so pleadingly besought me to be her captive yet a little longer, that I yielded once and again to her flattering prayer.

She had left me alone one afternoon, and I was sitting by the open casement musing, when there rose on the air a strain of music so wildly sweet and beautiful, that the thrilling vibrations seemed to reach my very heart. Never had I heard such sounds before.

I listened breathless with rapture, and as the magnet draws the steel, I felt myself lured, attracted, toward those heavenly harmonies. Unremeditatedly I wandered, on and on—down the stairs—along the wide hall, and through spacious saloons, till I stood in the presence of the inspired musician.

Oh, my beauteous Clara, adored, seraphic minstrel, how vividly my memory recalls thy lovely presence, as I then, for the first time, beheld it!

I had looked admiringly upon beautiful women before, and thought myself something of a judge of female loveliness, but no dream of my fancy even began to approach the radiant being my eyes rested on. She was seated at the harp, whose exquisite tones had ravished me, and grace, beauty, and harmony seemed blended in one perfect whole.

Unperceived I stood in motionless and breathless silence and listened, and gazed.

The tender, youthful form, the graceful head with its rich braids and soft curls of light brown, the outline of the rounded cheek—the smooth eyebrow and drooping lashes, the stately, delicate neck, even the dainty foot which now and then emerged from under her flowing robes, to regulate the pedals of the instrument—these were charms enough to craze a less imaginative man than I. For me, I was from that hour a new creature. It was the beginning of a bright, beautiful dream. The first glimpse in the heaven which was opening to me.

It would be but a bitter mockery for me now, to recount the history of my hearts' emotions during the period which followed.

I did not tell Clara of the love for her which sprung spontaneously, as it were, to life in my bosom. On the contrary I repressed every outward token of it. I allowed no word, or look to betray my feelings. Such I deemed my only honorable course under the circumstances. Gratitude and honor to my generous host forbade me to take advantage of my position under his roof, to win the affections of his only child and heiress. I was reserved and guarded; nor

did Clara in any perceptible way betray any inclination for me; and yet, so strong was the sympathy, or rather elective affinity which drew us together, that each, as I am convinced, reposed in the tranquil certainty of being entirely understood and beloved by the other.

One cloud only darkened our serene horizon. It was the fearful jealousy of Donna Marie, who seemed instinctively to feel how it would, and *must* be with us.

Often when, after my eyes had been resting on Clara's bright, spiritual face, I chanced to encounter the gleam of Marie's pale countenance, livid with an expression of concentrated rage and hate, I started at the virulent glance of those piercing eyes, and the remembrance of the frightful dream I had once associated with them, returned to me with a shudder.

My health soon became so far restored, that no excuse was offered for longer encroaching on General de Castro's hospitality; yet ere leaving his roof I deemed it incumbent on me to acquaint him with the state of my affections.

I had no hopes that he would favor my suit; I knew he had a right to look for a far more brilliant lot for his gifted daughter than any I could offer her. Perhaps I nourished a bright dream of winning fame and happiness in the future, but for the present, I had no hope. Still I judged it my hosts' right to *know* of my passion, and *mine* to assure him it had never been revealed to its object.

What was my surprise and gratitude then, to find that the general was far from treating my suit with the coldness I expected. On the contrary, he assured me he looked, in his daughter's husband, less for extrinsic advantages, of which she had plenty, than for an upright and honorable soul. Such, he was pleased to say, he had found mine, and he ended by giving me free permission to win his daughter if I could.

I could scarcely believe I heard aright. A rapture seized me, so great as to deprive me of even the power to thank my benefactor. With an overflowing heart I turned and left the room without having had the power to utter a single word. Yet surely he must have guessed what I felt.

As the door closed behind me, and I stood in the hall, then darkening in the twilight of evening, I felt my arm grasped by a hand of iron, and a suppressed voice hissed in my ear,

"Beware! *That* I will never permit—never!" "Is it you, Marie?" I replied. "Have you then overheard my conversation with the general?"

"Yes; and I forbid you to avail yourself of

the permission he gave you. I warn you not to dare to do it!"

"Pardon me, Marie," I returned gravely, and somewhat severely, "you must know that you have no *right* to attempt to bar my happiness thus."

"No," she answered, passionately, "I have no right, perhaps, but there *is* suffering too great for mortal heart to bear. Right or wrong, *this* I will not hear; therefore I warn you!"

I regarded her wild words as merely the ravings of a jealous heart. I said to myself, "Who shall excuse a woman's jealousy, if not he for whose sake she suffers its torments?" I therefore said gently, "Forgive me, dear Marie, the pain I most ungratefully and unwillingly cause you," and unclasping the little fingers which still grasped my arm, I kissed her hand tenderly and respectfully, and left her.

Feeling that this unlucky rencontre had already too long delayed my happiness, I flew to find my Clara.

I led her through the orange grove to a favorite bower of hers, which was formed of young orange trees closely twined and braided together, till it looked like some hermit's shady cell. It was a spot she greatly loved. The night air was heavy with the perfume of the orange flowers, and as we walked beneath the trees, my yet unrevealed secret leaped within my heart, and bounded to be free.

In the dim moonlight, beneath the darkening leaves of the bower, I told Clara all, and for answer she threw her arms about my neck. Bliss too great for words swelled my bosom as I folded her to my heart.

The raptured silence which fell upon us, was suddenly broken by a wild, agonized shriek in my very ear, as of some one in mortal pain.

Startled by the fearful sound, though I knew not whence it came, I sprang to my feet; but in the surrounding darkness could discern nothing. Clara had meanwhile fallen to the ground, fainting, as I supposed, from fright. I stooped to raise her. As I did so a warm gushing tide met my hand.

The frightful truth burst upon me. It was *Clara's* cry which I had heard—Clara's life-blood that was dyeing my hands. "My God! what devil hath done this?" I exclaimed.

A low, exulting laugh struck my ear, and looking behind me, I discerned a dark form close by, and a pair of burning eyes shining in the darkness like coals of fire.

Horror seized me. The nightmare which had tormented my delirium, returned to my reeling brain. Again I fancied myself in the power of

monster-woman, who crushed me in her embrace, and tore me beneath the dark waters. Again I saw those fearful, burning eyes—again I felt those white, glittering, human teeth sink into my heart; but oh, the pain was worse now, and I *knew* that the eyes were those of Donna Marie.

Reason had, for the time, mercifully deserted me.

Years have passed since this fearful romance of my youth, yet even now the most distant allusion to it causes my cheek to blanch, and my heart to stop beating.

Neither have I ever had courage to inquire respecting the after fate of Marie or the general.

When consciousness returned to me after that dreadful tragedy, I found myself on ship-board, homeward bound. It was a relief to feel myself leaving further and further behind me the scenes of so much joy and grief. Alas! I soon found I left but the joy, and was to bear the grief about with me forever.

Within my yearning, lonely heart one mournful cry is ever sounding—

“Dead is dead—gone is gone.”



## THE YOUNG TEACHER.

BY ESTHER M. SIDNEY.

"Coz, who is this young lady approaching?" exclaimed Mrs. Somers, as they sat at the front window of a beautiful residence on Arch street.

"I don't know," was Mrs. Winslowe's reply. "I presume she is a teacher in some of our schools, for she passes this way frequently."

Mrs. Somers was a wealthy widow lady from the South, who had come to Philadelphia to reside, for the sake of her youngest child, a sweet little girl of some six or seven summers, for whom the heat of a southern sun was unsuited. Having, in company with several friends, visited various watering-places during the summer months, she reached Philadelphia in September, where she was warmly welcomed by her cousin, Mrs. Winslowe, and pressed to make her home henceforth with her. This offer Mrs. Somers declined, but consented to remain until she could procure a dwelling in some quiet, pleasant location. She wished, also, to make arrangements for placing her two eldest sons at college; the third, who was two years older than Marion, she had allowed at her brother's earnest solicitations to remain with his family for a short time.

On the day succeeding her arrival at Mrs. Winslowe's, as she sat at her chamber window, observing the persons who passed along the broad, shady street, her attention was arrested by the appearance of a young lady, who, with a port-folio and several sheets of music in her hand, passed rapidly by, but with a bearing peculiarly easy and elegant. She was dressed in a simple suit of mourning. A green veil concealed her features, but Mrs. Somers felt sure that they must be beautiful; and she gazed with interest and admiration after the graceful form until it disappeared. The next morning being in the front parlor before the hour for breakfast, her eyes again encountered the same person, and the veil being now thrown back, a face of the most exquisite loveliness was revealed, but one wearing an expression which denoted early acquaintance with sorrow. Day by day the fair stranger passed by, in the morning at about eight o'clock, and again at noon returning the same way; and Mrs. Somers, who observed her with an undefinable interest, thought that each time her step seemed to lose a portion of

its youthful buoyancy, and that a deeper shadow rested on her brow.

On the present occasion her walk was peculiarly languid and unsteady; and her face had a death-like pallor. There was a slight quivering of the lips, and tears in the large, dark eyes; and kind-hearted Mrs. Somers could not easily banish that melancholy look from remembrance. Often during the day it returned; and again in the silence of her room that night. "Poor child!" she thought, "she is not fitted for the toil, perhaps also the contumely, which she has to endure. There is about her an unmistakable air of refinement and gentle breeding. Her father is, perhaps, a bankrupt; a wealthy merchant *once*—a lowly, poor man, *now*; and she, with a daughter's beautiful devotedness, is striving to lighten his unaccustomed burthen. She may have a widowed mother, aged and feeble, dependant on her exertions; or, sadder than all, she may be an orphan in the house of strangers or unfeeling relatives. Poor child! she cannot be more than eighteen; so young to struggle thus." And as the mother looked upon the little one slumbering beside her, so carefully and tenderly watched over by her unwearying solicitude, she resolved that when established in her own house she would make some inquiries relative to the sad, desolate-looking teacher.

She succeeded in obtaining a dwelling in the very situation she desired, which was soon fitted up in handsome style. Already the beneficial effects of the change of climate were visible on little Marion; and Mrs. Somers felt her heart expand with kinder feelings than ever for the unfortunate and afflicted. But she was disappointed at not seeing the young teacher any more. Marion, who shared with childish eagerness in her mother's feelings, looked from the window regularly at the appointed hour, but in vain.

At length, one fine afternoon, as the child sat at the hall-door, with the servant who had been her attendant from infancy, and had refused to be separated from her on the family's removal to the North, she suddenly spied the well-known form crossing the next street; and with the quick ardor of her age, skipped to the corner in time to see the lady enter the academy of Mrs.

Bladen, near by. With delight sparkling in her large, black eyes, she ran back to inform her mother of the important discovery. On the next day she did not forget to be on the watch at the same hour, but was disappointed. The following afternoon, as she was entering the house after a walk with her mother, several little girls of Mrs. Bladen's school passing by, paused a moment to look at the strangers; and Mrs. Somers, observing that one of the number had a drawing-book, took the opportunity of asking who was her instructor in that accomplishment, and was readily answered, Miss Olivia Tracey. The little girl also stated that her teacher had not been at school for two days; and they were very much afraid she was sick, for they all loved her. She only taught at one school beside theirs, and Mrs. Bladen often regretted that she was obliged to go there; as the principal was a cross, unfeeling woman, who often spoke to Miss Tracey so harshly as to bring tears to her eyes, and almost unfit her for giving the lesson.

Greatly moved by this account, Mrs. Somers asked permission to look at her drawing-book, and being satisfied by an examination of this, as well as by one or two other pieces left to copy, that the teacher was well qualified, she ascertained her place of abode, determining to call on her the next day, and, if possible, engage her to instruct Marion in music and drawing, for both of which the child had always manifested a particular taste.

Accordingly at noon, the hour when Miss Tracey was most likely to be found at home, Mrs. Somers repaired to the place designated. It was some squares from her house, in a short, but very pretty street. The building was a two-story brick, apparently nearly new, and with a neat, well-finished exterior. On ringing the bell, the door was opened by a neatly attired girl, who in answer to the visitor, replied that Miss Tracey had just come home, very unwell, and had lain down, but that at about two o'clock she could be seen. At the appointed hour Mrs. Somers returned. She was surprised on looking around the rooms. Cream-colored Venitian blinds; bright, handsome carpets; mahogany chairs; sofa and tables; vases with costly French flowers, and an alabaster clock on one mantel; handsome candlesticks and china ornaments on the other: here were no indications of misfortune or embarrassed circumstances. Miss Tracey now entered. She was of a marble paleness, her eyes were flushed and swollen as with recent weeping, and her voice was tremulous and broken. When Mrs. Somers explained her wishes, she expressed a fear that she would not be able

to instruct little Marion, as she was engaged during the hours at which Mrs. Somers would probably wish to have the lessons given: but here she paused, as she caught a beseeching look from the child, which mute appeal the mother instantly seconded; observing that she might make the hours suit her own convenience, as Marion could at any time attend to her instructions. The kind tone in which this was spoken completely overcame the composure which Olivia had till then struggled to maintain, and after an unsuccessful attempt to control her feelings, she burst into tears. Marion threw her arms caressingly around her neck, begging her not to cry; but while she warmly returned the embrace, her tears fell fast upon the child's glossy ringlets; and it was several minutes ere she could restrain their flow.

"Excuse me, madam," she then said, looking up timidly to Mrs. Somers, as if conscious that she should offer some explanation. "I have but one friend in the world besides my mother, and your kindness for the moment overpowered me. I should have more self-command, but I strive, in vain, to attain it."

"Never seek, my dear," said her kind visitor, "to control the feelings which nature has implanted in your bosom. Misfortune may cloud our prospects, and paralyze our energies, but its withering blight should never be allowed to reach the heart. I am no friend to that stern self-command which would on all occasions check the heart's promptings; nor do I think that a woman can ever acquire it save by the total loss of the sensitiveness with which she at first is obliged to struggle, a loss for which the calmness of habitual indifference is but poor compensation."

"I have heard very different sentiments," said Olivia, sadly, "and that it was very weak and childish in me to yield so often to my feelings, but, in a happy home, surrounded only by indulgent parents and smiling friends, one remains a child long after childhood's years have gone, and needs many a harsh lesson to teach the spirit fortitude to combat with life's trials."

In a few days Mrs. Somers became quite intimate with the young teacher, who, won by her patron's sympathy one day detailed her history.

Mr. Tracey had been a land agent, with a comfortable salary, and had managed to lay by something against a time of need. Olivia, an only child, was the idol of both parents, and on her was lavished every endearment that affection could suggest, as well as every care and expense needful to advance her education. When she was about fifteen, as they sat together one summer

evening, by the parlor window, a thunder-storm came up. Suddenly a vivid flash of lightning prostrated them all upon the floor. Olivia, who had only received a slight shock, almost instantly revived; but what was her horror to find all her efforts to reanimate her parents unavailing. A physician was hastily summoned, who at length succeeded in restoring Mrs. Tracey; but to the distracted inquiries of the poor girl about her father, he could give but the one heart-breaking response—he was dead! Several weeks passed before Mrs. Tracey could leave her room, and then it was with the slow, feeble step of premature old age; and alas, more fearful still, her reason was partially gone!

Other troubles were soon added. The little her father had saved had been invested in the house in which they lived. But his salary had ceased with his death, and Olivia saw that she must find some way of supporting herself and her feeble, helpless parent. She had first thought of removing to cheap lodgings, renting out the house, and selling most of the furniture; but the tenacity with which her mother clung to everything familiar, forbade the execution of this plan. On the first day of her partial recovery she gave proof of this; for, on seeing her daughter's mourning dress, she hastily desired her to change it, and to curl her hair as she always did; asking why she appeared so different from her usual custom. Poor Olivia, who had been forewarned by the doctor not to make any objection to her whims, silently obeyed; and thenceforward appeared in her mother's presence as in the days preceding their affliction; but when she went abroad, to the schools where she was employed, she wore her sable dress.

The hardships she now endured sometimes caused her almost to despair. Going out in all kinds of weather was the least among these, though the distance to each school being considerable, the consequent exposure soon began to make inroads on her health. But hard, very hard was it to be subjected to the petulance, the fault-finding, and, not unfrequently, the real harshness of Mrs. K——, who seemed to regard assistant teachers as a peculiar race of beings, who should possess all the perfections with none of the attendant faults of human nature; and on whom she could with impunity vent her ill-humor. Olivia, unaccustomed to this, was often sorely tried in her efforts to preserve patience, and sometimes her full heart sought relief in a burst of tears, which Mrs. K—— derided as an exhibition of temper highly unbecoming, or as very childish—even venturing once to insinuate that such *sensitive* feelings were not *suited* to one in a

*dependent situation*. Sometimes the afflicted girl was strongly tempted to resign her place; but as often the image of her mother rose to strengthen her against the thought; and when at noon she returned home, and saw that mother enjoying, through her exertions, all her accustomed comforts, she felt that she was performing a sacred duty, and this thought enabled her to regain her peace of mind.

Thus had passed two weary years at the time of the visit of Mrs. Somers. That lady, after hearing this sad history, remained for a time in silent thought. Though Olivia had scrupulously refrained from dwelling on the vexations she endured from Mrs. K——, yet her attentive auditor did not doubt the correctness of what she had previously heard; and earnestly considered how she might relieve her from these annoyances. At length, taking the teacher's hand eagerly in her own, she exclaimed,

"A new plan strikes me—suppose you relinquish your classes at Mrs. K——'s seminary, and devote your mornings entirely to Marion? I do not wish to send her to school, nor confine her to a systematic routine while her health is still delicate; but, under your direction, she could pursue the simple studies suited to her age without detriment to her health. Would you consent to this proposal?"

"Most gladly, madam. My engagement with Mrs. K—— will expire in a few weeks, and then I shall be happy to devote myself to your sweet child's instruction."

Olivia could scarcely believe the reality of the good fortune thus unexpectedly offered. Buoyed up by this pleasant prospect she no longer heeded the ill-humor of Mrs. K——, now, of course, greatly increased, but fulfilled her duties cheerfully, and at the appointed time became the instructor of Marion, as also of the two youngest children of Mrs. Winslowe, who willingly assented to her cousin's plan, that they should share Marion's lessons, instead of being sent to school. The salary arising from these children's tuition exceeded that given by the penurious Mrs. K——, and Mrs. Somers also granted Olivia the privilege of instructing several children in music at her house. Before the winter months had flown, Olivia was again happy and light-hearted; her step had regained its buoyancy, and her eye shone with its old lustre.

The fashionable circles of Philadelphia were thrown into a state of excitement that winter by the arrival of a distinguished stranger, young, wealthy, handsome, graceful, and talented, in short, there was nothing wanting in the description which Madam Rumor spread near and far

concerning the newly-arrived artist, Mr. James M. Clifford. The young ladies who made it a point of duty to visit his rooms as soon as they were thrown open to the public, declared unanimously that even the description conveyed no adequate idea of the man. As to his grace and courtly bearing, no words could do them justice; he was young, certainly, though on this point there was some disagreement; the greater number declaring that he could not possibly be more than twenty-five; while a few as positively maintained that he could not be less than thirty; but then *these* it was shrewdly whispered were not themselves quite as young as they would like to be thought, and therefore strove to make every one else old, too. Of his superior genius there could be no doubt, and he was unquestionably wealthy, for everything in his studio, and his own appearance attested that. Indeed, it was confidently reported that his labors were pursued through love of his noble art, only, and with no view to the pecuniary profits arising from them. But who was he? Where did he belong? These questions were the grand subjects of dispute. Though last from Italy, he was certainly not an Italian. There was nothing foreign in his accent. The clear, fair skin, lightly tinged with the blush of a sunny clime; the large, eloquent eyes of that peculiar shade of gray which is so inexpressibly beautiful; and the light chestnut locks that waved carelessly around his finely formed head, betokened, moreover, no foreign origin. And so, greatly to the disappointment of the fair ones who were always on the look out for a titled foreigner, they were obliged reluctantly to admit that he was *only* an American, who after many years' sojourn in other climes, had turned from their ancient beauties and glory to the fair young land of which, it was his proudest boast to be a son, and to the city where he had been born. Balls, parties and soirees in his honor were everywhere given. No assemblage was deemed complete unless graced with his presence. His exhibition rooms were thronged daily with admirers of his genius; and portraits and fancy pieces were ordered in any number, notwithstanding his high charges; so that, if there was any doubt that he was wealthy, there was none that he would shortly become so. A very popular man became Mr. Clifford, and though popularity has its annoyances, doubtless it has also its delights.

Mrs. Somers, who heard the artist's praises ringing on every side, conceived that he might be the most suitable one to take a full-length portrait of Marion, which she had long desired to have; accordingly, she invited Olivia one

morning to accompany her to the artist's rooms. It was yet early, and Mr. Clifford had not appeared. The ladies, however, passed the interval in examining the paintings. They felt at once the truth of all the encomiums they had heard. One painting, a beautiful head of the Madonna, particularly struck Mrs. Somers from its marked resemblance to Olivia. The hair, indeed, was a rich, soft auburn, and the eyes of a deep, heavenly blue, whereas Olivia's hair was a dark brown, and her soft orbs a beautiful hazel; but here the dissimilarity ended:—the round contour of the face—the clear, pure forehead, the winning expression of tenderness and purity, the soft, regular features were the same in both; and Mrs. Somers felt the likeness grow stronger the more she gazed. She was about to call Olivia's attention to it, when they heard a manly step on the entry, and the clear tones of a rich, musical voice, replying to a person in company; and the next instant the artist entered. He seemed somewhat surprised on beholding the ladies, but advanced to them with his usual grace and dignity.

Suddenly, however, Olivia started, with a look of bewildered joy, and a half audible exclamation of surprise, for she recognized in Mr. Clifford the favorite playmate of her infancy, the ever welcome visitor to her parents' house, but one she had never expected to see again. Little had she thought, when listening to the eulogies pronounced on the new artist, that he and her "Jamie" were the same person. And now, as she stands with the sudden surprise giving an unusual animation to her soft features, and lighting up her cheeks with the bright bloom which in childhood's days they wore, he too has recognized her, and the eager "Olivia, is it possible! can this indeed be Olivia?" rushed to his lips, as he impetuously grasped her hand with an ardor that told how well he had treasured her remembrance during their long separation. Mrs. Somers could but smile as she glanced to the Madonna: and she considerably left them to renew the acquaintance in the inner room to which he had immediately conducted them; while she again turned to the examination of the pictures around her. Thus more than an hour had passed, when Olivia suddenly remembering how time must have flown, rose and rejoined Mrs. Somers. The latter saw at a glance that the two friends had been recalling the past, for Olivia's silken lashes were still moist with newly shed tears: and during the general conversation that ensued, the artist's brilliant eyes were ever and again fixed upon her with an expression of deep and admiring sympathy. The elder lady

was soon as favorably impressed by his manners and conversation as she had already been by his talents, and congratulated herself on having her daughter's portrait taken by such a master hand. For this favor, indeed, she was indebted to Olivia, for the artist had already more engagements than he wished; it being his intention to devote his time principally to paintings which would deserve a more lasting fame; but then how could he refuse Olivia's friend?

Early in the spring the portrait was finished to the entire satisfaction of all parties. During its progress Mrs. Somers had, of course, many opportunities of forming a more intimate acquaintance with the artist, of whom she soon conceived a very high opinion. Before it was finished, moreover, Clifford was the accepted lover of Olivia. He would fain have named an early day for their union, but the noble-hearted girl would not have it so.

"You know, James," she said, "you know that I love you as I never could love another, I have given you my heart, but do not now ask for my hand. I have a sacred duty to fulfil to my afflicted mother, and I could not unite this with the faithful performance of my duties as a wife. Sometimes I think that God will, in his mercy, restore to her the faculties He has so mysteriously taken away: and this thought strengthens me. Should it ever be so, then, James, if you wish, I will be yours."

"If I wish—noble girl! Little do you conceive the depth of my love if you think that I cannot look forward to that day as the happiest of my existence—yet I will restrain my eagerness to call you mine own forever, and endeavor to prove myself worthy of your love, by not opposing your filial designs—trying as the delay will be."

Olivia did not reply, but she looked up with an expression of trustfulness of which her noble suitor was every way worthy. Both had confided the secret of their affection to their mutual friend, Mrs. Somers, who saw every reason to rejoice at the intelligence. She warmly applauded the filial devotedness of Olivia, and succeeded in persuading the impetuous lover that the gentle girl was in the right. She knew that his time of probation would not be very long, for she saw in Mrs. Tracey unmistakable symptoms of decline, though the devoted daughter, unaccustomed to sickness, perceived no change in her mother's already worn appearance to excite uneasiness. Clifford, also, knew that she could not continue long in the state of living death, by which she had now for several years held to the world; but neither one breathed such fears to Olivia, whose happiness seemed now

so complete—wanting nothing but that gift for her dear parent which she could not but think she would one day regain.

But as month passed after month, yet Clifford still continued insensible to the charms of the fair competitors for his hand, the report of his betrothal to Olivia became more generally credited.

At last the dread hour arrived. Olivia Tracey was paled with long and anxious watchings, and her eyes were heavy with bitter, bitter tears; for a resistless hand had touched her long afflicted parent; the eyes were fast dimming to the things of earth—the spirit would soon cease its weary conflict with life. Yet, as the time drew near to emancipate its long prisoned wings, the torpor that had so long bound her mental faculties gave way, and again she possessed her reason. Once more was Olivia folded to the faintly throbbing bosom, with the deep, earnest tenderness that she had not been blessed with for several years.

"Do not grieve, my own sweet girl," said that dear voice, now, alas! faltering and low. "Do not mourn because I am hastening to my eternal home. I know I do not leave you friendless, my child; and that is a sweet consolation at this hour. The Father of the orphan will be near you; and already He has shown His love by raising up for you a true and dear friend. He will not abandon you when I will be no more."

And the dying woman turned toward Mrs. Somers, who had indeed proved a real friend, tender and unremitting in her kind offices to both mother and daughter during this sickness. She could not reply in formal words to the mute appeal so earnestly enforced by the pleading eyes; but she stooped over the quivering form of the poor girl, and kissed her with almost maternal fondness, as she tenderly put back the heavy tresses that fell around her damp forehead. The mother's look spoke far more eloquently than language could do, her deep gratitude.

"He hath given her yet another friend," said a manly voice, though subdued by emotion; and the two sorrowful watchers by the death-bed recognized with wonder the voice of Clifford. He had entered unobserved save by the dying one, whose solicitude for her child prevented her taking any farther notice of his appearance. "You do not remember me, dear madam," he said, gently taking the invalid's hand in his own. "During these many years, you have of course forgotten the boy who was once a frequent and welcome guest at your home—you do not remember James Clifford?"

With a slight start Mrs. Tracey examined his features closely, and a smile of recognition and pleasure beamed upon her wasted and hollow face.

"I should have known you at once, dear James," she said, faintly, "for I always loved you as my own son."

"And shall I not be really so?—shall I not indeed be your son and Olivia's protector through life?" and the young man drew the weeping girl within his arms, and bent with her beside the dying mother. Only for an instant did she look upon them; then turned an inquiring glance upon Mrs. Somers, whose answering look satisfied her. "Take her, James," she said, feebly but solemnly, as she placed the unresisting hand of her daughter in Clifford's warm grasp. "I trust that you will be kind and faithful to her; take her, my son, and may God's blessing rest on you both."

An hour after the calm of eternal repose settled on the sufferer's features. With a burst of lonely and desolate anguish, such as can be felt only

beside a mother's corpse, Olivia threw her arms around the dear remains, and felt a longing wish to close her eyes also upon the world. But kind hearts and gentle hands were near her to bind up the spirit's wounds, and when the first gush of passionate sorrow had subsided, James drew her tenderly to his faithful bosom.

"Look up, my own sweet love—am I not thine, thine forever, with our mother's blessing?—and our kind friend will be to you as the tender parent God has taken to his own bright home. Look up, my own Olivia, for my sake bear up against this blow."

And the orphan did look up through her fast falling tears, and blessed God with a grateful, though chastened heart, that He had given her a friend to console, and a strong, faithful arm to lean upon in the day of her deepest sorrow.

## THE ORPHANS FROM THE ALMS-HOUSE.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

[Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1854, by Edward Stephens, in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.]

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 272.

### CHAPTER XVII.

"MOTHER!"

"My son, don't speak so loud; you quite make me start; and with these delicate nerves you know a shock is quite dreadful—why don't you say mamma, softly, with the pure French pronunciation, and an Italian tone. 'Mother!' I did hope, after travelling so many years, that you would have forgotten the word."

"No, mother; I have not lost the dear old English of that word, and pray God that I never may. Still more do I hope never to lose that respect, that affection, which should make the name of mother a holy word to every son."

"My dear son, don't you understand that affection uttered in vulgar language loses its—its—yes, its perfume, as I may express it. Now there is something so sweet in the word mamma, so softly paternal—in short, I quite hear you cry from your little crib with its lace curtains, when you utter it."

"Mother, let us be serious a moment."

"Serious, my child. What on earth do you want serious?"

"Mother!" and here young Farnham took a paper from his pocket and held it sternly before his mother's face.

"What is this? Did you authorize the purchase of these claims against the helpless old man and woman down yonder?" he said.

Mrs. Farnham turned her head aside, and taking a crystal flask from the table before her, refreshed herself languidly with its perfume.

"Did you authorize *this*, madam?" cried the young man, impatiently, dashing one hand against a paper that he held in the other. "This purchase, and after that the seizure of the old man's property? I must have an answer."

"Dear me, how worrying you are," answered the lady, burying the pale wrinkles of her forehead in the lace of her handkerchief; "how can I remember all the orders with regard to a property like ours?"

"But do you remember *this*?"

"Why, no, of course I don't," cried the lady, with a flush stealing up through her wrinkles, as

the miserable falsehood crept out from her heart; "of course the man did it all on his own account. What do I know about business?"

The young man looked at her sternly. She had not deceived him, and a bitter thought of her utter unworthiness made the proud heart sink in his bosom.

"Mother," he said, coldly, and with a look of profound sorrow, "whoever has been the instigator, this is a cruel act: but I have prevented the evil it would have done."

"You prevented it, how?" cried the mother, starting to her feet, white with rage, and all the languor and affectation forgotten in the burst of malicious surprise, that trembled on her thin lips, and gave to her pale, watery eyes the expression, without the brilliancy, that we find in those of a trodden serpent. "What have you done, I say?"

"I found the money!"

Mrs. Farnham sat down, and remained a moment gazing on the calm, severe face of the youth, with her bony hand clenched upon the folds of her morning dress, and her foot moving impetuously up and down on the carpet, as if she panted to spring up and rend him to pieces.

The youth had evidently witnessed these paroxysms of rage before, for he bent his eyes to the ground as if the sight awoko some old pain, and turning quietly, seemed about to leave the room.

"You have done this without consulting me—countermanded my orders, defeated my object—how like you are to your father, now."

The last words were uttered with a burst of spite, as if they contained the very essence of bitterness, the last drop in the vials of her wrath.

The youth turned and lifted his eyes, full of sorrowful sternness, to her face. "Then you did—you did!" He paused, and his lips began to tremble under unuttered reproach that sprang up from his heart.

"Yes," cried the woman, weak in everything but her malice, "yes, then, I did order it done—these people have tormented me enough with their miserable old house, always before my eyes,

and that odd ugly face staring at me as I go to church. I tell you they shall leave the neighborhood, or I will. Give me the papers."

The youth lifted his eyes and regarded her sternly.

"They are cancelled, madam, and torn to ribbons, that our name might not be disgraced."

"Torn to pieces?"

"In a thousand pieces, madam. I would have ground them to dust, if possible."

"You shall answer for this," cried the baffled woman, and with that sort of weak ferocity which is so repulsive, she sat down and began to cry.

The young man drew close to her chair, for though his whole soul recoiled from sympathy with her, he forced himself to remember that she was his mother and in tears.

"Why do you dislike these old people so much?" he urged, with an attempt at soothing her.

"Because *he* liked them!" she answered, dashing his proffered hand aside; "because his low tastes followed him to the last; he was always talking of the creature that died the night you were born. He cared more for her to the last, than he ever did for me; and I hate them for it. Now, are you satisfied?"

"Mother, you are talking of things that I do not understand."

"Well, your father was engaged to Anna, the girl that died in the old hovel down yonder; engaged to her when he married me."

"Then my father committed a great wrong?"

"A great wrong! Who ever doubted it, I should like to know? Even to think of her after marrying me—to say nothing of the way he went on—sometimes talking about her in my presence, with tears in his eyes. Once, once, would you believe it, he said—to me—me, his lawful wife, that your eyes—it was when you just began to walk—that my own baby's eyes put him in mind of her."

"I remember so little of my father, nothing in fact, only that he was a fine-looking man, with some grey in his hair, and that I loved to sit on his knee; but it seems hard to believe that he wilfully wronged any one."

"Wilfully! I wish you could have seen him when I, with the proper spirit of a woman, felt it my duty to expostulate with him about his feelings for that creature; how he took me up as if I were to blame for being young and beautiful, and in the store just under his hotel, as if I had some design in standing at the door about meal times, or could help him coming in after collars and cravats afterward, and, and——"

She stopped suddenly, and all the sorrowful wrinkles of her face burned with a crimson more

vivid than exposure in the actual commission of a crime would have kindled there; her meek spirit cowered beneath the looks of surprise that her son fixed upon her, as this confession of original poverty escaped her lips.

"I mean, I mean," she stammered, after biting her lips half through in impatient wrath, "that he should want my advice about such things before he was married."

It is a mournful thing when respect becomes a duty impossible to perform. Young Farnham felt this, and again his eyes drooped, while a flush of shame stole over his forehead.

"Well, madam," a woman of more sensitive feelings would have noticed that he did not call her mother, "well, madam, whatever cause of dislike may have been in this case, I cannot regret that all power to harm these old people is now at an end. The notes are cancelled, the money paid to your agent from my own pocket."

"But, you had no right to pay this. You are not yet of age by some months. I will not sanction this extravagance."

"Nay, madam, this money is mine, and was saved from the extravagance that you *did* sanction. I had intended to have purchased a gift for Isabel with it, but am sure that she will be better pleased as it is."

"To Isabel, five hundred dollars to Isabel!" cried the harsh woman. "This is putting a beggar on horseback with a vengeance."

"Hush, madam, I will not listen to this; you know, or might have seen long before this, that the young girl your language insults, will be my future wife."

"Your *wife*! Isabel Chester *your* wife! A pauper, and the child of a pauper! Say it again, say that again if you dare!" cried the woman, in a whirlwind of passion.

"When you are calmer, madam, I will repeat it, for no truth can be more fixed, but now it would only exasperate you."

"Go on—go on, let me hear it again. It proves the Farnham blood in your veins, always sighing and grovelling after low objects. Go on, sir, I am listening—you intend to make *me* mother-in-law to a pauper; a miserable thing that I took to keep me company, as I would a poodle dog, and dressed and petted just in the same way. Marry her! try it, and I'll make a beggar of *you*!"

"I do not know that you have the power to make me a beggar, madam, but a slave you never shall make me; as for Isabel," he added, with a sorrowful smile on his lips, firing up with something of her own ungovernable anger, "she is at least your equal and mine."



"My equal, the pauper, the—the—oh—oh!"

Insane with bitter passion, the woman stamped her foot fiercely on the floor, and began tearing the delicate lace from her handkerchief with her teeth, laughter and hysterical sobs hissing through them at the same moment.

"Madam, restrain yourself," pleaded the young man, greatly shocked, "I have been to blame, I should have told you of this some other time."

"Never, never," she answered, tearing the handkerchief from her teeth, and dashing it fiercely to the floor. "The miserable Alms-House bird shall leave my roof. I have got her pauper garments yet—would you like to see them?—a blue chambrey frock and checked sun-bonnet—it was all she brought here—and shall be all she takes away."

Again she stamped fiercely with her foot, and menaced her son fiercely with her thin hand. "Send the girl to me, I say?"

"I am here, madam," said Isabel Chester, walking firmly up the room, her cheeks in a blaze of red, and her eyes emitting quick gleams of light. "I am here, madam; I heard every word that you have said," continued the young girl, in a hoarse, low tone. "I am here to take leave of you forever."

"Isabel, Isabel Chester!" exclaimed young Farnham, turning white, and yet with a glow of animation in his fine eyes, "my mother was angry; she would not repeat those offensive words again; she loves you!"

"But I do not love her!" answered the proud girl, regarding the woman whom the world called her benefactress, with a glance of queenly scorn. "Her very kindness, has long been oppressive; her presence almost hateful; now it is entirely so."

"Isabel, Isabel!" exclaimed the young man, "remember she is my mother, and you, beloved, are you not my wife?"

Isabel Chester turned her beautiful eyes upon him, and their proud fire gleamed through the tears that filled them like star-light through the evening mist.

"No!" she answered, in a very low and firm voice, "never will I become the wife of that woman's son. My very soul recoils from the thought that she who can so insult ever had the power to confer benefits upon me. She is right; I will go forth with the pauper garments in which she found me at first. God has given me health, talent, energy; with his help I will yet repay this lady dollar for dollar, all that she has ever expended on me. I shall never breathe deeply again till this is done."

"This is gratitude, this is just what I expected

from the first," said Mrs. Farnham, applying the mutilated handkerchief to her eyes. "It's enough to sicken one with benevolence forever. This girl, now, that I've educated, taught everything, music, painting, all the ologies and other sciences, see how she has repaid me, after putting herself in the way of my son, and tempting him to degrade himself by marrying her."

Young Farnham started forward and attempted to arrest Isabel, who had turned in proud silence, and was leaving the room.

"Isabel, where are you going?"

She turned, and looking into his anxious eyes, answered,

"Anywhere out of this house, and away from her presence."

"No, no, you shall not do this."

"I must; ask yourself if I could remain here another hour without being in soul what she has called me in name—a pauper."

Farnham paused. Rapid changes, the shadows of many a turbulent thought, swept over his face. Isabel lifted her eyes to his with a look of sorrowful appeal, as if waiting for him to confirm her resolution.

"But where will you go, my Isabel?"

"I have not yet bethought me—but this lady here taught me to respect myself. I have been spending an idle, useless life, dependant on her bounty; and that no human being endowed with health and energy should ever content herself with being. Henceforth I will redeem the past."

"Stay with me, here, my Isabel, stay in your home, but not as a dependant, not subject to any one's caprice. Become my wife, and this day shall you have a right here, holy as any that ever existed!"

"Farnham!" cried the old lady, starting fiercely upon the scene, "remember the difference, remember who she is and who you are!"

"He need not, madam. I remember this. But only to assure myself that in all things I am his equal and yours," answered Isabel. "Do not suppose that I have any of that miserable pride, that would make me reject this noble offer, because in the chances of life he happens to be rich and I poor. I give to wealth no such importance. Human souls should match themselves without trappings, that have nothing to do with their greatness. To say that I will not marry Mr. Farnham because he would give me a legal right to spend wealth, which I have no power to increase, would be to acknowledge a mean reluctance to receive where I would gladly give. No, madam, it is not because I deem myself in any way an unfit wife for Mr. Farnham, that I regret, gratefully regret, his offer, but I

will never enter a family where these things can be supposed to give superiority, never while one of its members rejects me because of my poverty."

"Isabel, Isabel!" exclaimed young Farnham, with a look of distress, "you cannot love me, or this pride would not separate us."

Isabel laid her hand on his arm. Her eyes filled, and her lips began to tremble.

"I *do* love you, heart and soul I love you! but I cannot become your wife. It would be to separate the son from his mother, to grasp at happiness through an act of disobedience!"

"But my mother *will* consent," cried the young man, turning with a look of anxious appeal to Mrs. Farnham, who stood near a window, angrily beating the carpet with her foot.

"You needn't look this way—you needn't expect it. I *never* will give my consent. If Mrs. Farnham's son chooses to marry a pauper, I will never own him again."

Isabel cast one sorrowful look at her lover, and feeling her eyes grow misty as they met his, turned away.

"I will go now," she said, in a hollow voice, and, with a heart that lay heavy and burning like heated lead in her bosom, she left the room.

Young Farnham followed her, pale and anxious.

"Isabel, sweet Isabel, you cannot be in earnest!"

"Miserably in earnest!" she answered, staggering blindly forward, for a faintness crept over her.

He caught her in his arms.

"I knew—I knew it could not be; you have no strength to put this cruel threat into force against me!"

"Don't—oh! don't, I am faint, my heart is breaking—let me go while I can."

She clung to him as she spoke, and rested her head wearily on his shoulder as he strained her closer to his heart.

"Oh, my Isabel, you love me, have told me so now for the first time with the very lips that renounce me forever, You love me, Isabel!"

"You knew it—before this you knew it," she murmured, amid her tears.

"Yes, yes, I felt it; what need has the heart of words. I felt it truly, as now, but the sound is so sweet from your lips, Isabel; say it again."

"Yes, why not, as we shall part so soon. I love you, oh, how much I love you!"

"Then, stay with me."

"No, no!"

"I can and will protect you from every annoyance; stay with me, Isabel!"

"Oh, if I could, if I only could!" cried the young creature, looking wistfully at him.

"You can, you will, my beloved. A little time, a little patience, and all will be well. Come, come, stop crying, my heart aches to see your tears. Be comforted, my life, and say once more that you love me."

"I do, I do!"

"And that you will never leave me?"

She drew a deep, unsteady breath, her eyes began to brighten through their tears; he held her close to his breast, and pressed his lips, quivering with an ecstasy of love, upon her forehead.

"You will stay—you *will* stay!"

She released herself gently from his arms, her eyes were flooded with tenderness, her cheeks lighted up with a glow of joyous shame. With that graceful homage which comes so naturally to the heart of a loving woman, she took his hand and pressed it to her lips, and stood drooping beneath the overflow of tenderness that filled her heart, as a flower stoops on its stock when overloaded with honey dew.

But this beautiful submission did not satisfy him; he encircled her again with his arm.

"Tell me in words, dearest—tell me in words, consenting words, or I shall gather them from your lips."

Blushing and agitated, she attempted to withdraw from his arms, but softly as a bird moves in its nest.

"Speak, Isabel, speak, and promise me!"

Her eyes were filled with tears, and her face burned with blushes; where was her pride, where all her haughty resolutions now? Her lips trembled apart, and the words he coveted trembled upon them—but that instant the door opened and Mrs. Farnham looked through, regarding them with a cold sneer.

Isabel started as if a viper had stung her, tore herself from Farnham's arms, and fled.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN uncle Nathan led his blind nephew into the house, and told aunt Hannah who he was, she grew pallid as a corpse, and when the young man took her hand she began to shiver from head to foot, till the chattering of her teeth was audible in the stillness.

"It is our nephew, little Anna's boy, come to live with us, Hannah."

"To live with us?" she repeated in a hoarse voice.

"Yes," answered uncle Nathan, taking the youth's hand between both his plump palms, and smoothing it caressingly as he would have quieted a kitten, for he felt all the chill that was in her

voice. "Where else should our sister's child make his home?"

"But his father!"

"My father is dead," answered the youth, sadly, "and before he went I was told of all your kindness, how for years your own means of livelihood had been stinted that I might become perfect in music. God deprived me of one sense, but your goodness has almost given me another in this new love of music. I have not wasted your means, aunt, and some day, God willing, may return something of all that you have done for me."

Aunt Hannah listened in silence, but her eyes burned deeply in their sockets, and her hands worked nervously around each other. Happily the blind youth saw nothing of this, or he might have doubted the welcome so expressed.

It was now late in the night, and with anxious haste aunt Hannah turned to a stand, where an iron candlestick supported the end of what had been a tallow candle.

"We are all tired," she said, presenting the candlestick to uncle Nathan. "He can sleep in the spare bed up stairs."

Uncle Nat took the candle and conducted his relative from the room, leaving aunt Hannah standing by the hearth, pale and almost as rigid as marble.

"It will come, it *must* come at last," she muttered, solemnly, and then she began to pace up and down the kitchen with measured strides, with her eyes cast down, and her fingers lashed together as if made of iron. Thus the morning found her, for she did not go to rest that night.

The next day, just before sunset, uncle Nat was enjoying himself as usual in the old porch, while Mary Fuller and the blind youth sat together on the threshold of the door, conversing in low tones between the pauses of an impromptu air which he gave to them in delicious snatches. Behind, in the dark of the kitchen, sat aunt Hannah, gazing over her knitting work at the group. Her hands were motionless upon the needles, and she seemed lost in profound thought. All at once her lips moved, and she muttered,

"Yes, they, too, will love each other, I can see it plainly enough. Poor Mary, it is well that he is blind; but how he turns to her voice, how greedily he listens when she speaks; can the love of childhood revive so suddenly? What do I know of love, but its humiliation and pain—rejected, despised, trampled on!"

Here her hands began to tremble, and she worked her needles for a moment, vigorously, but made another abrupt pause the minute after, and thus her thoughts ran:

"Well, why should they not marry, these two helpless creatures? she is dearer than a child to us, the true-hearted Mary, and he, who could help being good under the care of a father like his? She loves him, I can see it in her eyes, in the quiet humility of her look; she loves him, and he loves her; they will soon find it out, but the others, I must see the young man; what is the use of shrinking, it *must* be?"

Aunt Hannah was disturbed in her reverie by a light step that came through the outer room, followed by the quick opening of a door, and Isabel Chester came in.

Poor Isabel! her eyes sparkled wildly through their tears, her face was flushed, her lips quivering, and the rich masses of her hair hung in waves around her head. Still was she wondrously beautiful, for grief softened a style of loveliness sometimes too brilliant and imperious. In tears, Isabel was always sweet and womanly. She was a being to cherish as well as to admire.

She entered hurriedly, and flinging back the shawl, of mingled colors, that partially covered her head, looked eagerly around.

"Mary, where is Mary Fuller?" she inquired, "I wish to speak with Mary Fuller."

Mary heard her voice and sprang up.

"Oh! Isabel, this is kind, I am glad you have come so soon."

"Come with me, Mary. I must speak with you."

"Let us go up to my room," said Mary, with some excitement, when she saw the flushed face and agitated manner of her friend.

Aunt Hannah looked keenly after the girls as they disappeared and drew a deep breath. "The hour is coming, I feel it," she muttered, dropping the knitting work into her lap, and gazing hard at the door long after it was closed.

She was still motionless, gazing on the distance in this hard fashion, when the door was pushed open and Mary Fuller looked out.

"Aunt Hannah, dear aunt Hannah, will you come up here?" she cried, in an excited voice, "Isabel and I want you."

Aunt Hannah arose, folded her needles, cleaned them at the end with a pressure of the thumb, and thrust them into the ball of yarn, muttering all the time,

"It is coming, I could not help it if I wanted to," and she mounted the stairs.

Isabel Chester lay on the bed, white with anguish, but with a feverish heat burning in her eyes. The shawl, with its many gorgeous tints, lay around her, mingling with her purple dress in picturesque confusion. She tried to sit up when aunt Hannah approached the bed, but

instantly lifted both hands to her temples, and fell back again sobbing bitterly.

"Ask her, ask her," she cried, looking wildly up at Mary Fuller, "I have been wandering in the hills so long, and am tired out. You ask her for me, Mary."

Aunt Hannah sat down upon the bed, and Mary Fuller stood before her holding Isabel's hot hand in both of hers. With the eloquence which springs from an earnest purpose, she told aunt Hannah all that she had herself been able to gather from the lips now chattering with the chill that precedes violent fever. It was a disjointed narrative, but full of heart fire. Mary wept as she gave it; but aunt Hannah sat perfectly passive, gazing upon the beautiful creature before her with a steady coldness.

When Mary had done, and stood breathlessly waiting for a reply, the old lady moved stiffly as if the silence had aroused her.

"Then she wishes to stay with us," she said.

Isabel started up. "I will be no expense, I can paint, and embroider, and sew, and, and, oh! I can do so many things. All I want is a home. Give me that, only that!" She fell back again, shivering and distressed, looking up to aunt Hannah with a glance of touching appeal that disturbed even the composure of that stony face.

"You will let her stay with us!" pleaded Mary.

"What else should we do?" inquired aunt Hannah. "She wants a home, and we have got one to give her. Isn't that enough?"

Isabel, who had been looking up with a living hope in her eyes, broke into a hysterical laugh at this, and seizing aunt Hannah's hard hand, kissed it with passionate gratitude.

"One word," questioned aunt Hannah, "do you love that young man?"

"Love him, oh, yes, yes, a thousand times, yes!" cried the poor girl, and the sparkle of her eyes was painful to look upon. "I think it must kill me to see him no more. I am sure it must!"

"And you are sure he loves you?"

"Sure?" she cried, flinging out her clasped hands, "sure, yes, as I am of my own life!"

"And you believe him to be a good man?"

"I know it, have we not grown up together? He is passionate, proud, impulsive—but noble. I tell you his faults would be virtues in other men."

As aunt Hannah listened, there came a glow upon her sallow cheeks, and a soft smile to her lips, as if something in the wild enthusiasm of Isabel had given her pleasure.

"She shall stay with us! Surely with all our debts paid, we can find room for the child."

"Room—room—room—make room—make room!"

Isabel had caught the word, and sent it back again with wild glee, half singing, half shouting it through her burning lips. The fever was beginning to rage through her veins.

Three times that night aunt Hannah went to the front door, to answer the eager questions of a young man, who had been wandering for hours in sight of the house. At last, as if struck with sudden compassion, the old lady invited him into the kitchen, and these two seemingly ungenial persons sat and conversed together with strange confidence till the day dawned.

When young Farnham arose to go, he took the aged hand of his companion and pressed it to his lips, with that habit of gallantry acquired from abroad. He did not see the blood flush up into that withered face, or the tears that gathered slowly into her eyes; and was, therefore, surprised when she arose, and as if actuated by an unconquerable impulse, kissed his forehead.

"Good-bye," she said, in a broken voice, "the poor girl up stairs shall not die for want of good nursing."

"How good you are," said the young man, "how can I ever repay you?"

Aunt Hannah looked at him with a strange fondness.

"You paid our debts last night," she said, "or we might have had no home to give this girl."

"That was nothing, never mention it again."

"Nothing, why, boy, it was an act that you shall never forget to your dying day."

"Save her, and that will be an act that I shall never forget."

"Do you love her so then?"

"Love! I worship her—I can never remember the time when I did not love her!"

"And what would you sacrifice for her?"

"What? Everything."

"Stop and answer me steadily. If you could choose between all the property left by your father and Isabel Chester, which would you take?"

"Which would I take? Labor, poverty, and my Isabel. This property! what has it of value in comparison to this noble girl—I answer again Isabel, Isabel!"

A singular expression stole into the old woman's face.

"Would you live here, and work the place, when Nathan and I are too old?"

"I would do anything with her and for her," cried the youth, ardently.

"And," continued aunt Hannah, in a broken voice, still eyeing him anxiously—"you would

find a corner for two old people somewhere in the homestead?"

"This is wild talk," said the young man, with a troubled smile. "I am my father's heir, and have no power to throw away his wealth; so it is useless talking of what I would, or could, do under other circumstances."

"Then you would not be content to live here with your wife, and support yourself from the place?"

"I did not say so—but that it was impossible. Heaven knows I count wealth as nothing compared to Isabel."

"Then you only think of her, you care nothing for, for——"

Aunt Hannah paused, and put a hand to her throat, as if the words she suppressed pained her.

"I care for her, and for all that have been kind to her, now or ever," he replied, compressively, "most of all I am grateful to yourself."

"Once again," said aunt Hannah, clinging tenaciously to the point which seemed to interest her so much, "if you could not marry Isabel Chester without becoming poor, as my blind nephew is—would you give up all and marry her?"

"Once again then, yes, I would."

"And be happy after it?"

"With her, yes!"

"But you have never worked?"

"I can learn!"

"You are learned, and love to mix with great men. You are proud, and this is a poor old house!" She argued so earnestly that he could not refrain from smiling.

"I fancy, if the need come, I would get along with all these difficulties, without much regret. But this is idle speculation. In another month I shall be of age; then no one can claim legal authority over me or mine. I know there is great wealth to be accounted for, but have never inquired how much, or what restrictions are upon it. If it leaves me at liberty to marry Isabel, for her sake independence shall be welcome; if not, then I will answer your questions more promptly than you perhaps expect."

"That girl will never marry your mother's son."

"She shall marry me. Who can help it? Do we not love each other? If her proud spirit regrets the property, so be it—I care as little for gold as she does."

"I say it again, Isabel Chester will not marry Mrs. Farnham's son," persisted aunt Hannah.

And she was right. One month after, when Isabel lay pale and convalescent on Mary Ful-

ler's bed, she was resolute in her refusal to see Farnham as at first; resolute, but gentle in it all, as a newly blossomed flower.

## CHAPTER XIX.

"MARY FULLER, what ails you? All this time your eyes are heavy, and you look every other minute as if just going to cry. What is it all about?"

This was a long speech for aunt Hannah, and it made Mary start and blush like a guilty thing, especially as it followed a protracted silence that had been disturbed only by the click of aunt Hannah's knitting-needles.

"Matter with me, aunt? Nothing. What makes you think of me at all?"

"Because it is my duty to think of you. Because there is need that some one should take care of you."

"Of me?" said Mary, blushing to her temples, "what have I done, aunt?"

"What everything of womankind must do, sooner or later, I suppose, my poor girl."

"What is that, dear aunt?" faltered the girl.

The old lady laid down her knitting, and leaned on the candle-stand with both her elbows, thus her aged face drew close to that of the young girl.

"You have begun to love this poor blind youth, Mary Fuller!" she said, in a low, tremulous whisper, for the very name of love thrilled her old heart as a sudden shock sends veins of silver along a sheet of ice. "Don't cry, Mary; don't cry; it is a great misfortune, but no fault. How could you help it, poor child!"

"Oh! aunt Hannah, how did you find this out?" whispered back the shame-stricken girl, "I thought——"

"That nobody knew it but yourself. Well, well, don't look so frightened; it's no reason that others know it because I do."

"And Joseph, do you think—do you believe—I would not think it for a moment," she continued, glancing down at her person with the most touching humility, "but he cannot see all this—and so I—I did not know but——"

"I think he does love you, Mary Fuller!" answered the old lady, breaking through her broken phrases, in womanly pity of her embarrassment, Mary started as if a blow had fallen upon her.

"Oh! don't, don't, I dare not believe it. What! me?—me? Please don't say this, aunt Hannah, it makes the very heart quiver in my bosom."

"I am sure he loves you, Mary, or I would not say it. Do I ever joke? Am I blind at heart?"

Mary Fuller covered her face, while great sobs

of joy broke in her bosom, and rushed in tears to her eyes.

"Oh! I am faint—I shall die of this great joy—but if you should be mistaken?"

"But I am *not*. How should I be mistaken? When a mother buries her child deep in the grave-yard, does she forget what a mother's love is? Those who forget their youth in happiness may be deceived. I never can!"

"And you think he loves me?"

Mary leaned forward and laid her clasped hands pleadingly on the knotted fingers of the old maid.

Aunt Hannah looked down almost tenderly through her spectacles, and a smile crept over her mouth.

"I know he loves you."

Mary Fuller's radiant face drooped forward at these words, and she fell to kissing those old hands eagerly, as if the knotted veins were filled with honey dew upon which her heart feasted.

"Stop, stop," said aunt Hannah, withdrawing her hands, and laying them softly on the bowed head of her protegee, "don't give way so, remember our nephew is blind and we are poor, only a few acres of land to live on, and getting older every day. There is not the strength of one robust man among us all—to say nothing of the poor girl up stairs."

"But he loves me. Oh! aunt you are sure of that?"

"But how can he marry you? Blind as he is, and no more power to work than a child."

"Marry me! I never thought of that," said the happy girl, lifting her face all in a glow of happiness from her hands, "but he will live here always and so will I. Morning and night, and all day long I shall see him, hear his music, watch the changes of his beautiful, beautiful face—you may grow old as fast as you like, you and uncle Nat. I can support you, Isabel will teach me to paint pictures, and I can sell them in the city. Besides, Joseph can make music on his violin, and I have learned to write it out on paper. The rich people in New York will give money for such music as his, I know, you shall not work so hard after this, aunt Hannah; and as for uncle Nat, he shall snooze in his easy-chair all day long if he likes."

Aunt Hannah shook her head, and a mist stole over her spectacles. She was getting very childish in her old age, that stern old maid.

"You are a nice girl, Mary," she said, "and mean right, I know. But Joseph will never be content to let you support him if you had the strength. He is very manly and proud with all his softness."

"I know it, aunt, but then you know I am like his sister."

"But sister's do not support their brothers, and men do not like to take favors where they ought to give them."

"Oh! aunt Hannah, you make me so unhappy. What difference can it make which does the work where two people love each other?"

"This!" answered the old maid, "women were born to look upward with their hearts and cling to others for support—men were made to give this support. You cannot change places and be happy!"

"I see, I see," murmured Mary Fuller, thoughtfully.

That moment Joseph came in from the garden, where he had been walking by himself, for the day was fine, and he had learned all the narrow paths among the vegetable beds with speedy intuition.

Mary looked at him wistfully. She remembered that for some days he had seemed sad and preoccupied, going alone by himself and drawing only sad strains from his violin.

"Aunt Hannah, are you here?" inquired the youth, moving slowly toward his seat by the stand, "I want to talk a little with you! while Mary is with her friend."

Mary started and would have gone out, but aunt Hannah lifted her hands to prevent it, and the youth sat down sighing heavily, and doubtless unconscious of her presence. Two or three times, as was his habit when thoughtful, he drew the slender fingers of his right hand through his hair, scattering the bright curls back on his temples. At length he spoke, but with hesitation,

"Aunt!"

"Well, nephew!" and the old lady began to knit, avoiding Mary's anxious glance.

"Aunt, I come to say—" he paused, and drew the hand once or twice across his forehead, as if to sweep away some inward pain, aunt Hannah remained silent, knitting diligently. "I must go away from here, aunt, you have given me shelter when I most needed it. Now I must take to the world again."

Mary listened with a sinking heart, and parted lips that grew cold and white with each word. At last a wild sob arose in her throat, and the veins upon her forehead swelled with the effort she made to suppress it.

"You wish to leave us then?" questioned aunt Hannah, coldly, "and why?"

"My life is idle here, utterly idle and dependant. God did not smite all the manhood from my soul when he darkened my eyes. I

cannot live on the toil of two old people whom my own hands should support."

"But you are welcome, Joseph; and we love to have you with us."

"I know it—still this should make me only more anxious to relieve your generosity of its burden."

"This is not all," said aunt Hannah, mildly, "you keep the principal reason back for leaving us, tell me what it is?"

"Perhaps I ought—though the reason I have given should be enough. Yes, aunt, there is another motive—do not laugh at my folly, that I cannot force my soul to be as blind as my eyes—that I cannot dwarf myself and become a helpless nonentity, without a struggle to grasp the blessings so much desired by other men. This has been a happy life that I have known at the old homestead, but what has it secured to me but unrest, and such disquiet as will follow me through life——"

He broke off hesitating for words, and a faint blush stole over his face.

Aunt Hannah saw the blush through her spectacles, and had compassion on him.

"I know all about it," she said, quietly, "you love Mary Fuller. She is a good girl. Why not?"

"Why not?" exclaimed the youth, passionately, "am I not blind?"

"That is God's work, but no fault of yours!"

"But how can I support a wife? I who cannot earn bread for myself?"

"You wish to leave Mary then?"

"Wish to leave her! Do the angels wish to flee from paradise, when all its flowers are in blossom? No, bear with me, good aunt. It may be folly, but, notwithstanding this infirmity, I have some power. Let me try it. Every year sends a troop of persons to our country who turn their music into gold. Why should not I?"

"And what would you do then?" inquired the old lady.

"What should I do!" exclaimed the youth, with enthusiasm. "Why, return to you with the money I had earned, and instead of a burden, become a protector to your old age."

"And Mary."

"Then I could, without cowering with shame at my own helplessness, ask her to forgive my blindness, and love me even as I love her."

"But how many years must go by before you can return to us? The best part of her life and yours will be passed before then."

"I know it. I feel all the madness of my hopes. They are wild, insane perhaps, but I will not give them up; do not ask me, do not discourage me; why should my whole life be

sacrificed because God has denied me sight? Why must I, with my heart and brain alive like other men's, live and die alone?"

Aunt Hannah looked at Mary Fuller, who was pale as marble; the pupils of her eyes dilated blackly, and her mouth curved with a thrilling smile. For an instant the girl was more than beautiful. The triumphant consciousness that she was beloved glorified that face.

"And now," said the youth, more calmly, "you will let me depart, or I shall speak out love that is becoming too powerful for concealment. I shall tell her that the blind beggar loves her, and dreams of making her his wife."

Mary arose. The joy at her heart swelled painfully, and her delicate frame trembled beneath it. She would gladly have crept from the room with her sweet burden of happiness, but this excitement had been continued too long, and her trembling limbs gave way and she sunk to the floor.

"Who is here? what is this?" cried the youth; "has another heard my confessions of madness?"

"I heard it all, forgive me, forgive me. I could not go out at the first attempt, my strength gave way——"

"You heard me!" questioned the youth, pale and trembling. "You heard all that I said. Girl, girl, you have stolen the secret from my heart to despise me for it."

Mary Fuller rose to her feet, and tottered toward him. The beauty of an angel glowed in her face; it was bright with holy courage.

"Despise you for it! I, who love you so much!"

"Love me! Stop, Mary, do not say this if it is not holy truth, such as one honest heart may render to another."

"It is holy truth. Take my hands in yours. See how they quiver with the joy of your words."

"But I am blind, Mary."

"And I, what am I?"

"Oh! you are beautiful. I know that you are beautiful!"

"No, no!" cried the poor girl, covering her face with her hands.

"But you are. I drink in beauty from your voice, there is beauty in your touch. Oh! how I long to see, that these eyes, too may drink in their portion of your loveliness."

"Oh! forbear, forbear, it is Isabel you are describing. Do not force me to thank God that you are blind," said Mary, shrinking away from him. "Oh! nature has been very cruel to me!"

"Hush, Mary, hush, I see you in my brain, I feel the tones of your voice thrilling through and through me. This is all the beauty I can comprehend. When you disclaim it, I hear the tears

breaking up through your voice, and it grows painful in its sadness to me. Your beauty is immortal, it can never grow old!"

The youth paused, and turned his sightless eyes toward aunt Hannah, for his quick sense had caught the sobs that she was striving to smother by burying her face on her folded arms. Many a stern grief and sore trial had wrung that aged heart, but for a quarter of a century she had not wept heartily before. As she looked on these young persons, each so stricken by Providence, and witnessed the first rich joy of their love, her heart gave way. The memories of her youth came back, and in the fullness of her regrets she cried like a child.

Mary Fuller withdrew her hand from her lover, and drawing close to aunt Hannah, stole her arm around her neck.

"Aunt, dear aunt, look up and tell Joseph that he must not leave us. Tell him how strong I am to work for us all."

Aunt Hannah lifted her face, and swept the gray locks back from her temples.

"What day of the month is this?" asked the old lady, standing up and speaking in a subdued voice, "it should be near the tenth of November."

"To-morrow will be the tenth," answered Mary.

"Stay together while I go talk with Isabel." With these words the old woman went up stairs feebly, as if her tears had swept all her strength from her frame.

Mary and her lover sat down by the hearth and fell into a sweet fragmentary conversation. Soft, low words and broken sentences, the overflow of two hearts brimful of happiness alone passed between them. A strange timidity crept over them. Neither dared approach the subject of a separation, though both were saddened by it.

Aunt Hannah came down at last, calmer, and with more of her usual cold manner.

"Help me," said Mary, appealing to her; "oh! aunt, persuade him to stay with us!"

"To-morrow will be time enough," was the answer. "Go away, now, and God bless you both!"

Never in her whole life had the voice of aunt Hannah sounded so deep with meaning, so solemn in its earnestness. It was seldom that she ever blessed any one aloud, or entered, save passively, into the devotions of the family—now her benediction had the energy of an earnest soul in it. The very tones of her voice were changed. She seemed to have thrown off the icy crust from her heart, and breathed deeper for it.

Mary and Joseph went out, and sat down together in the starlight, that fell so softly upon

them through the apple boughs. They had so many things to say, and confessions to make; each was so timidly anxious to search the heart of the other, and read all the sweet hidden mysteries that seemed fathomless.

Meantime aunt Hannah went into the out room—that in which her sister Anna died, and kneeling down, with her hands pressed on the bottom of a chair, broke into a prayer so deep and earnest that her whole frame shook with the agony of her struggle. She arose at length and began to walk the floor, wringing her hands and moaning as if in pain. Thus she toiled and struggled in spirit all night, for it was the anniversary of her sister's anguish and death. Many a softening influence had crept into that frozen nature, with the young persons who had brought their joys and sorrows beneath her roof, and now came the solemn breaking up of her heart. She learned the true method of atonement in the stillness of that nightwatch. It was the regeneration of a soul.

When the day broke, she crept up to Isabel Chester's room, and kissed her pallid cheeks as she slept. "Be comforted," she said, smiling down upon the unconscious face; "be comforted, for the day of your joy is at hand."

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## CHAPTER XX.

ONE day Farnham suddenly appeared at the farm, bearing every evidence of having travelled far and fast. He asked to see Isabel in a private interview.

Aunt Hannah, who had been in the out shed, saw him only as he ascended to Isabel. She clasped her hands, and murmured to herself, "the time has come."

For some five minutes only a low murmur of voices was heard above. But directly Farnham's tone became raised, and what was heard it was evident he was pleading with all the energy of a loving and determined heart.

At last he hurriedly descended the stairs. His face was flushed; his handsome hair in disorder; and mingled emotions of anger and sorrow were working in his features. Aunt Hannah had taken a seat, where she would be sure to see him as he came down; and now she rose and confronted him, her whole countenance struggling with painful emotions.

"She refuses you," said aunt Hannah. "Is it not so?"

Her agitation, as she spoke, was almost as great as that of the young man.

"Yes!" was the answer. Then, with a sudden burst, "oh! can nothing change her?"



"She will never marry Mrs. Farnham's son."

"She must, she must," cried the suitor, wildly striding up and down the room into which aunt Hannah had led the way, and the door of which she now shut. "What right has she," he asked, almost fiercely, stopping suddenly like a chafed lion, "to make us both miserable forever?"

"She will never yield," replied aunt Hannah.

The young man, who had started off again, rushed back to the speaker at these words, and grasping her hands in his, while he looked pleadingly into her face, said,

"Go to her, she may listen to you."

But his companion shook her head.

"But only try. I am rich, now. I am independent of my mother. You don't think I could have remained absent while Isabel was sick," he continued, eagerly, "if it had not been, that, having reached my majority, it was necessary that I should see my trustees and settle up my father's estate. I owed it to her to ascertain, as soon as possible, whether I could ask her to share my lot, without consulting my mother. I heard every day from her, and, if she had not recovered, would have come back in spite of business."

He paused, for he had spoken so rapidly that he was breathless.

"You are your own master, then?" said aunt Hannah. "I mean, you are the undisputed owner of Mr. Farnham's wealth?"

"Yes. I inherit everything. My mother had a jointure settled on her, when she married, in consideration of which she waived her right to dower: and so, in my father's will, everything was left to me, as his sole heir."

Aunt Hannah had risen from her seat, her face ashy pale, her hands clasped, and trembling all over. In a low, husky voice, so unlike her natural one that her hearer started, as if a ghost had spoken from the tomb, she said, grasping Farnham's hand convulsively,

"What if I show you a way to get Isabel? Would you sacrifice your wealth?"

"Willingly. But it is not to my wealth she objects. She told me, just now, that if I was poor as the veriest beggar, she would marry me, if I was not Mrs. Farnham's son."

"Would you become poor for her?"

"Gladly. But why these questions?"

He seized aunt Hannah by the arm as he spoke, and drew her directly in front of him.

"Suppose I prove that you are not Mrs. Farnham's son!"

He started back incredulously, his eyes dilated wide with wonder. But he was speechless.

"Yes! not her son," replied aunt Hannah,

her voice shaking, in her agitation, as if with an ague fit.

"Not Mrs. Farnham's son!" cried the young man.

"As sure as there's a God in heaven, I can prove it," said aunt Hannah, impressively.

"Then Isabel will marry me," was Farnham's ejaculation. And suddenly clasping his hands, and raising his eyes to heaven, while over his whole countenance there broke a gratitude beautiful to see, he cried, "my God, I thank thee!"

"But the property?" interposed aunt Hannah.

"Let it go! You asked me once if I could work," replied the young man, his eyes kindling with fine enthusiasm. "Try me! I have hands," and he held them forth, "white and delicate now, but strong and muscular, as you see. Oh! I will labor like a slave for Isabel."

The tears came into the hard, dry eyes of aunt Hannah.

"You will come here and work the old farm?"

"If you will let me——"

He stopped all at once, the look of joy faded from his features, and his face became dark and livid as when a November cloud suddenly comes across the sky.

"You are jesting with me?" he said, wildly.

"This cannot be true. I am in a dream." And he buried his face in his hands, as men do when they would fully arouse themselves from sleep.

"You are in no dream. Every word I tell you is true. I have the proof to establish it in any court of justice. There is a son," her voice trembled eagerly as she spoke, "there is a son of Mr. Farnham; but it is not you. You were exchanged for him within an hour after you were born."

The young man stared at her for a moment. Then a light began to break upon him.

"What?" he ejaculated. "Is your nephew Mrs. Farnham's son?"

Aunt Hannah inclined her head.

"I am so glad," cried her companion. And in a burst of generous admiration he cried. "He is more worthy of this vast wealth than I am."

"Shall I go and see Isabel for you now?" asked aunt Hannah. "May I tell her all?"

"Stay," said the young man, laying his hand on her arm to restrain her, and immediately recovering a comparative degree of composure. "We must be certain before we act, perfectly certain. I don't mean to question anything that you tell me; but Isabel is a peculiar girl; and she will require nothing short of the most irrefragable proof. Let me hear more of this evidence you say you have."

"You are right," answered aunt Hannah.

"Sit down, and I will tell you."

It is not necessary for us to repeat what she said. The reader is already familiar with the story of poor Anna's desertion by the elder Mr. Farnham, her marriage to the travelling artist, the birth of her boy, and her death on that stormy night. The strange tale of Salina, must also be fresh in the memory, that, on her leaving the infant heir of Mrs. Farnham, born on the same evening, alone for a few minutes, she was surprised to find a drop of rain on the babe's forehead; a little slip on the floor, like Anna had worked for her baby, and unlike any Mrs. Farnham had; the marks of wet footsteps leading to the kitchen door; and that door wide open, with the wind rushing in and flaring the candle.

"It was I," said aunt Hannah, in a choking voice, "who, in revenge, for Anna's abandonment, did it. I changed the babes. In my hurry I forgot to bring away the slip, which Salina afterward picked up, and, by the interposition of Providence, as I see now, has preserved."

Farnham listened to this tale with varying emotions, as the rapid changes of his countenance showed. He was torn by conflicting feelings. There were pity and love for his true mother; indignation struggling against the reverence in which he had always held his father; and a joy, that grew more triumphant, as his clear, educated intellect saw the cumulative proof which aunt Hannah would be able to bring forward. When she had ceased, he had but a single question to ask.

"The identity of the slip can be proved, and by others than yourself?"

"Yes, brother would know it, I am sure. It is marked also."

"That is sufficient. With your positive testimony, corroborated by Salina and uncle Nat, there isn't a jury in New York but would find me not the true heir."

He spoke with a gladness that almost amounted to glee. Aunt Hannah, who, notwithstanding his former assurances, had trembled as to what he would do and say when he found himself shorn of his wealth, gazed on him with secret joy, her heart yearning to him as Anna's child.

"Now you may go to dear Isabel," he said. "But break it to her gently; she is still weak, you know."

He looked, however, so much like wishing to go himself, that aunt Hannah, after she had made a step toward the door, turned back, saying,

"Perhaps you can tell her best. I will come, when you send for me, and corroborate what you say."

The happy lover had only waited for this permission. He darted past her, and went up stairs, two steps at a time.

Poor Isabel! almost exhausted by the stormy scene with her suitor, and with her heart nearly broken by the necessity of adhering to her just resolution, still lay weeping on the bed, where she had thrown herself when her lover departed. Mary Fuller was sitting on the edge, holding the hand of the sobbing girl, which she stroked affectionately, kissing it now and then, her own tears falling rapidly. At the sound of the quick footsteps, followed by the knock at the door, both the girls started to their feet.

Neither Isabel nor her lover, nor even Mary Fuller, though she might have been supposed to be less agitated, could ever give a connected account of what was said at that interview. All that Mary was able to remember was that Isabel nearly fainted dead away at hearing her lover aver he was not Mrs. Farnham's son; and that she herself, a little later, quite imitated this example, when told who that son really was.

The reader can imagine something by the joyful amazement of uncle Nat, the incoherent wonder of Salina, the terrified surprise of Joseph, and the angry denials of Mrs. Farnham, when they severally became acquainted with the romantic change in the heirship to the Farnham estates.

Mrs. Farnham was disposed, at first, to resist, declaring the whole tale a fabrication. But, on taking eminent legal advice, she was assured that the testimony was conclusive against her. "Besides," added the lawyer, "the young gentleman, whom you assert to be your son, denies that he is so, and will be no part to a suit, but on the contrary expresses his determination to make over to the real heir the whole of the property. You have your jointure, madam, which can never be touched, and so you need fear nothing."

But though prevented from litigating the matter, Mrs. Farnham could never be brought to acknowledge Joseph as her son. He made frequent attempts to obtain an interview with her, and wrote more than one dutiful letter, for his heart turned toward her, cold-hearted woman of fashion as she was, as soon as he knew that to her he was indebted for his birth. But she obstinately refused to admit him to her presence, declaring passionately that he was an impostor, and venting her imbecile rage in imprecations on uncle Nat and especially aunt Hannah. Very soon she left that part of the county, and directly after sailed to Europe, where she lived on her jointure, till she died a year or two ago.

There was one interview between her and her

late supposed son, however, before she left. In it she endeavored to persuade him to resist the claim of Joseph, and when he steadily refused, she broke out into terrible denunciations against him as "an enemy to his own blood." He tried vainly to soothe her. He professed that he should always dutifully remember what she had done for him, during so many years that they had been together, and that he would respect her still as a parent. But she would listen to nothing but the unconditional submission she demanded, and when he still refused, finally drove him from her presence, raving like a lioness from whom her young have been torn. Her maid feared, for an hour or two subsequently, that her mistress would die from the violence of her passions. It was early the next morning, that Mrs. Farnham left the neighborhood, as we have seen, forever.

A serious altercation arose between the two young men, after this, as to the surrender of the Farnham estates. The supposititious heir persisted in resigning everything to Joseph, and the latter as steadily declined to accept the sacrifice, insisting that Isabel's lover should retain one-half, as his equitable right under the peculiar circumstances of the case. But neither he, nor Isabel, would consent to this arrangement. The generous strife went on, for some time, until finally the lawyer, whom the real heir now consulted, surprised all parties by telling them that it was extremely doubtful, considering the technical words of the will, whether, after all, Isabel's lover was not the legal owner of the property.

"The estates came by devise," he said, "not by descent, for such is the effect of a will always. A testator can devise to whom he pleases, omitting the right heirs altogether. In this case he has intended, no doubt, to devise to his own son; but he as manifestly intended to devise to the present possessor, whom he knew and loved. Nor

do the words of the will assist us. The devise is to 'James Farnham, my only child.' Now the young gentleman is known as James Farnham, and in that sense the devise is to him. But he is not the son, and in that sense the devise is not to him. Here is contradiction. But, later in the will, the devise is repeated in specific terms, to 'James Farnham,' all allusion to the relationship being here omitted. Now, in wills, it is a rule of law, that the last words are the binding ones, and hence I conclude that the former reputed heir would take as devisee, because the person known as James Farnham."

Other lawyers were consulted, and the most eminent in the land: and all gave the opinion that the case, at least, was one of doubt. Under these circumstances, one being legally the owner of the estates, and the right heir refusing to accept a full conveyance of them, a compromise was recommended, and finally acceded to, though unwillingly by him whom we have called young Farnham. It was agreed that the property should be equally divided.

"This also is the only just way," said Joseph. "You have been brought up to regard these estates as your own, and it would be a great wrong in me to accept all. You shall do me one favor, however, in return for what you insist is my cruel obstinacy, which is to make over to me what the lawyers call your reversion in uncle Nat's farm, which, you know, would, some day, be yours, as heir. I have talked to Mary about it. She loves the old place too much to leave it: and besides she knows all its ways, and uncle and aunt know hers. We would not live at the big house down yonder. You and Isabel take it: you two will adorn it: and we'll see each other every day."

And so it was finally determined, wisely as we think, and most happily for all.

THE END.

## THE SOLDIER'S RETURN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE VALLEY FARM."

## I.

A GREAT battle had been fought. Thousands had been wounded, and hundreds slain.

In many a once happy home, the newspaper, that brought intelligence of the victory, was the harbinger of tears and despair.

It was so to the family circle of Capt. Arundel. A wife, and several lovely children, the last of whom was still in its mother's arms, learned, on that day, that the one had no husband, the other no father. His name appeared prominent among the killed.

For awhile Mrs. Arundel forgot even her babes in her grief. Her despair was so utter that she prayed to die.

Few men, indeed, had realized so fully as husbands, the promise they held out when lovers, as Captain Arundel. Stern when his country's foes were in question, he was all tenderness to his wife. What wonder that she worshipped almost to adoration one so brave, so accomplished, and so superior!

But, in the midst of her agony, she suddenly remembered her children. She snatched the infant to her arms, convulsively strained it to her bosom, and frantically kissed it again and again. "Little dear," she cried, "what would it do without me. No, I must live for its sake."

The tears which followed this burst of emotion probably saved her life.

Gathering her babes about her, she held them in turn to her heart, talked to them of their father, and made them promise to strive to grow up like him. In those first days of grief, this was her only comfort.

## II.

TIME passed. The wife and mother had become, in a measure, accustomed to her loss. She felt indeed that there was a void in her heart, which would never be filled; but she no longer prayed for death.

Her whole time was now devoted to her children. She recalled every wish she had heard her husband express relative to the manner of their education, and resolved that it should be her sacred duty to endeavor to fulfil them.

"They shall be in all things like he would

have desired them to be," she said. "That is if I can make them so, which, by God's grace, I hope to do."

Her aged parents came to comfort her in this her great affliction. They determined to abide with her, as well to assist her in her work, as to cheer her by their presence and sympathy.

Early in life, their counsels had sent her to the Bible, as the only solace on earth in the hour of affliction: she had never abandoned this friend; and the reading of the sacred book was now the sole occupation of their leisure. Gathering her little ones about her, she would sit, with her infant in her arms, in the midst of her treasures, while her father perused aloud the inspired pages.

## III.

It was Christmas Eve.

Without, on hill and valley, on land and water, shone the unclouded moon. Within, merry fires crackled and blazed, while happy faces and glad voices abounded.

But the jocund season brought not to Arundel Cottage its usual hilarity. For the orphaned children, for the widowed wife, who walked yet, as it were, in the shadow of death, the holiday revels seemed forevermore impossible.

The Bible lay open on the table. The grand-sire was reading from the beautiful gospel of St. John, and the mother sat, as usual, with her infant at her bosom, and her other little ones clustering about her, when suddenly the door opened, and a tall form entered.

Could it be? Or was it but a wraith? Had the grave given back its dead?

They started to their feet. All but the mother, who putting up her hands, for a moment, incredulously, shrieked as she recognized her husband: and in the next instant was clasped in the arms of the living reality; while the infant, crowing with delight, clung to both parents by turns.

It was, indeed, he. Left for dead on the battle-field, he had been found by kind hands after the army had moved on; had been nursed through a long illness; and finally had reached home in advance of the letters which he wrote to announce his safety, but which had miscarried.

What a Christmas Eve that was! Between smiles and tears, questions and ejaculations of thankfulness, the hours wore on unperceived, until the midnight clock surprised the happy family.

For the wife and mother, the children and grandparents, could scarcely realize that the returned soldier was indeed theirs; that "he that was lost was found," that "he that was dead was alive again."

When, at last, they knelt down to return

thanks to God, before retiring, how every heart swelled with gratitude at the happiness vouchsafed to them. How they commiserated others who still wept without hope.

This was forty years ago.

War is again desolating the nations. Let us hope that other mourning families may yet drink life and joy in the return of a father and husband, instead of the bitter waters of Marah they have been quaffing since the news of the last great battle.

## THE EDITOR IN HIS SANCTUM; OR, A VISIT FROM JEREMY SHORT.

A FAMILIAR CHAT ABOUT EQUESTRIANISM, THE BABY SHOW IN OHIO, COUNTRY NEWSPAPERS,  
LOST CHILDREN, KISSING BRIDES, MARRYING IN GENERAL, "KNOW NOthings,"  
MAGAZINES, "I CAN'T AFFORD IT," DRESS, &c. &c.

EDITOR.—Can I believe my eyes? Is this really my old friend, Jeremy Short?

JEREMY SHORT, Esq.—The very same. Hale and hearty, though seventy-four to-morrow; and still able to walk ten miles daily, or ride a thorough-bred.

EDITOR.—It's been so many years since I had seen you, that I began to fear you were dead, especially as I hadn't been honored with a line from you. But give me your hat and cane. Take my arm-chair. How's Beechen Grove?

JEREMY.—It never looked more beautiful than in this autumn weather. The trees were just beginning to turn when I left; the sunsets were gorgeous; and the distant mountains looked as if steeped in purple wine. I came to town to see your State Fair.

EDITOR.—What did you think of it?

JEREMY.—Capital, sir, capital. The display of flowers reminded one of dreams of Paradise. The cattle were magnificent. As a farmer, which I'm proud to be—

EDITOR.—A gentleman farmer—

JEREMY.—No, sir, a farmer simply is what I aim to be, for it's the noblest and grandest of all occupations: as a farmer, I say, I was charmed with those grand, broad-backed fellows, worthy to bear off new Europas, whom I saw in almost every other stall.

EDITOR.—And the horses?

JEREMY.—They were very fine. Not quite such a display as at Springfield though.

EDITOR.—We have been laughing here at the prizes awarded to the saddle horses. The judges seemed to know as much about true horsemanship as a bull does about the fine-arts. They awarded the first prize to a poor, almost worthless beast, because it nacked, passing over several splendid animals, trained to all the figures of the *menage*. They told one gentleman, who has nearly the most perfectly broken saddle horse in the United States, when he was exhibiting what his steed could do, that "they didn't want to see such fancy work; what was his pace?" They could understand trotting in two forty, with a pull of a ton on the driver's hands, but not a

delicate mouth, fine action, changing foot, the *passee*, or ought else worthy of the good old days of horsemanship, when knights and cavaliers caroled their mettled steeds at tournaments, or backed them at full trot to the ends of the lists, after having been crowned by the fair hands of the queen of beauty.

JEREMY.—Ha! ha! ha! Veritable Dogberrys in the judgment seat. But fine horsemanship is a rare thing now. It was not so when I was young; and in my father's days, every gentleman broke his own steed. Alas! for the good old times.

EDITOR.—*Hard* riding is not *good* riding. People seem to think, in these times, that if one can keep his seat, and perhaps leap a fence, he is a great horseman—

JEREMY.—That's only the A. B. C. of horsemanship.

EDITOR.—Exactly. Yet I could tell you some queer tales about people, who, because they can do this, sneer at that perfect horsemanship, which reduces even the highest mettled barb to an obedient machine.

JEREMY.—Not better ones than I could. I was at a watering-place awhile this summer, for example, where a lady was staying who rode a thorough-bred broken *a la Baucher*. One morning, while her cavalier was waiting for his horse to be brought to the door, she mounted in advance, and began backing the steed and putting him through the figures of the *menage*. While doing this, a gentleman came along on horse-back; and apparently one who thought himself an admirable Crichton. Seeing the lady's horse going sideways, caracoling and backing, he thought she was unable to manage him, and stopping called out for her "to give the beast his head and perhaps it would follow his animal." Ha! ha! There's a horseman for you. Faith! he was almost competent to have been one of your judges. He was certainly, "a senseless and fit" man for the office.

EDITOR.—Ah! don't be too hard on them, Jeremy. Talking of fairs, have you read the accounts of the "Baby Show" in Ohio?

JEREMY.—Nothing—Nothing but the simple award of the premiums. How I should have liked to have been there!

EDITOR.—I saw the several prizes, when they were exhibited in this city. But (*taking up a newspaper*) let me read you this account, written on the spot: it brings the scene up vividly: and next to having been there is hearing this. "The tent," says the reporter, "presented a novel, amusing and interesting sight. The mothers and nurses were seated and had the 'little darlings' all ready for inspection, that is as near ready as could be. To see so many babies together was novel; to note the maternal efforts to present them in the best mood, was amusing, and to gaze upon their innocent faces and purest of charms was certainly interesting. There sat a mother, her eyes directed alternately on the judges and on a little cherub which lay in her lap. By her sat another, holding up proudly a lovely little girl, whose flaxen curls and sweet blue eyes would soften the heart of the greatest baby-hater in Christendom. Next to her a nurse was endeavoring to quiet a stout, black-eyed, rosy-cheeked 'one year old,' who insists on pulling the jet black ringlets of another one about its own age. One lady points with pride to the chubby legs of her darling boy, while another glowingly refers to the delicate, but well-formed features of her sweet babe. One boasted of having the largest of its age; another of the smallest and smartest. Some of the babies seemed to feel their importance on this occasion, and, in spite of the most earnest entreaties, would be in mischief and keep up a continued noise. Others appeared unwilling to 'believe their eyes,' and lay quietly in their mother's arms, watching the proceedings with apparent interest, whilst others insisted on hiding their innocent faces in their mother's bosoms, as if they knew their refuge was there! Then the expressions which fell on one's ears! 'Tome to mudder's arms, mudder's little pet.' 'Oh! you darling 'little toad!' 'Bless its 'little heart, it shall have some tandy.' 'Tot, tot to Baidy-boas, on its mamma's 'little boas.' 'Stan' up, musser's 'little pet.' 'Its sweet, so it is, mudder knows it is.' 'Dump if it wants to, tause it tan dump.' 'Tiss mamma now, wont it tiss mamma?' 'Bouncety bounce, bouncety bounce.' 'Now what a naughty boy, see, the gentlemen are coming.' 'That's a good baby—nurse can tame its hair, an' it don't try a bit.' 'Sweetie, sweetie, mother's sweet,' and an hundred more just such expressions." And no wonder, Jeremy, for there were one hundred and thirty-seven babies entered for exhibition.

JEREMY.—(*rising*) I fear I encroach too much on your precious time. Pray, proceed with what you were doing: examining this pile of newspapers, wasn't it?

EDITOR.—Yes! I have about fifteen hundred exchanges, and I make it a point to look over them all personally.

JEREMY.—An instructive task I should think. Country newspapers do not get justice done to them generally: for in many respects they are more worthy than the mammoth weeklies of our great cities.

EDITOR.—You speak truly. I have often thought that a capital article for the Magazine might be made, almost every day, out of materials taken at random from the exchanges received by the last mail.

JEREMY.—A brilliant idea. Suppose we try it now.

EDITOR.—With all my heart.

JEREMY.—Here's something to begin with. At a glance I see that it is one of the dramas of real life which are transacting daily about us, and which excel the highest wrought fiction in interest and pathos. It is the story of a child, lately lost in the woods, in one of the interior counties of your state. "On Saturday morning, of last week," says the McKean Citizen, "a little girl some three years old, daughter of H. McCabe, of this town, started with her oldest brother to drive away the cows. The little boy after sending his sister home through the woods, went off to play and did not return until three o'clock, P. M. The parents, supposing the girl with her brother, remained unconcerned until his return, when the truth (awful truth to a parent's mind) came upon them, that their child was lost in the woods. Rapid search was made by the almost frantic and sorrow-stricken mother till evening, when, the father returning, the neighborhood was rallied, and the woods, for a limited distance, were searched, but in vain. No trace or track could be found. The search was continued during the night with torches, but without success. It was dark and rainy. The mother became wild and frantic. Morning came—but with it no child. Early on Sabbath our village was summoned for assistance. Never was call so cheerfully and heartily responded to. Everybody that was able to travel was on the ground at eight o'clock. Lines were formed with men so close that not a foot of ground could be passed unnoticed. The line consisted of near three hundred persons. The woods in which the child was supposed to be, were some two miles through from east to west, and about thirty miles from north to south. This body of men made one search

through, and were making another still further south, when the child was found. When first discovered, she stood by the side of a large berry patch, quite unconcerned, where she had evidently been picking and eating. Never before did we hear such shouts as resounded through these dense woods, from one end of the line to the other. Horns were blown, guns were fired, and all kinds of demonstrations of joy were manifested. Almost in an instant, scores had gathered around the child, all anxious to see the lost one. Never shall we forget the look of that father as he gazed upon his once lost treasure. Eagerly seizing her and impressing a kiss upon her cheek, he kneeled down amidst the gazing crowd, with hands and eyes uplifted to heaven, exclaiming from the bottom of his heart, and with feelings that brought tears to all eyes, 'God Almighty bless you all—Amen.' A runner was immediately despatched to the mother, with news that the child was found alive. Her joy was unspeakable, yet for hours after the child was restored to her, she was strangely wild."

EDITOR.—Little darling!

JEREMY.—I'll not apologize for having had to stop and wipe my eyes; and it does honor to your heart that you also shed tears. After all, cynics may abuse human nature as they please, but the manner in which neighbors turn out, when a child is lost on the mountains, shows that the diviner element still burns in man. Thank God for it!

EDITOR.—(After a pause.) Here is a capital story in the humorous vein. I read from an Alabama Journal. "In the days when we were young"—editors, you know, always speak in the plural—"we made one of a happy throng of youngsters, who, after having spent a delightful afternoon in the various duties and amusements usually incident to an old-fashioned 'Quilting in the Country'—such as rolling up, toteing water, threading needles, &c.—found themselves with the quilt out, the room cleared and swept, the chairs all placed against the walls, and everything in readiness for a regular quilting frolic. Our party, in addition to the boys and girls, included several married persons, some older and some younger, most of whom had just dropped in to see the young folks enjoy themselves, and to partake of the creature comforts which usually constitute an important feature in the programme on such occasions. But among them was John B— and his newly wedded wife, the latter of whom, by the by, was scarcely sixteen, and decidedly the prettiest girl in the room. Her husband was a man of about five and twenty, full six feet high, and withal had

the reputation of being the 'best man' in the district, and ready at short notice to prove it, also. After the usual preliminaries in the way of small talk and compliments, just to wear off foolish embarrassment, the order of the evening commenced with the play called 'Contentment,' and many a pawn was paid and faithfully redeemed, not by repeating verses of poetry, standing five minutes with the face to the wall, walking three times around the room blindfolded, or any such tame performances as are commonly practised in the more refined circles of the cities, which only serve to remind one of the better times in the country—but in the primitive way, by good old-fashioned, honest kissing, that sounded out clear and distinct like the cracking of a wagon whip, set the old folks' mouths to watering, and made old Mrs. Deal whisper to Mrs. Skelton that 'she didn't see why a married woman couldn't enjoy plays just as well as single gals; for her part, she didn't see no difference; because she was old, it warn't no reason she shouldn't feel young.' The sport continued for some time, the boys ever and anon slyly peeping at the pretty face of Mrs. B—, and only wishing they could select her as a partner, but restrained by the fear that her stalwart husband might think proper to resent such a liberty with his new bride; in consequence of which latter impression, she was, for the time being, a mere wall-flower. But, meantime, this state of things was observed by John, who, construing this lack of attention to one whom he thought as deserving as any, into a want of proper respect toward his wife, and by reflection toward himself, determined it should no longer pass unnoticed. So, rolling up his sleeves, he stepped into the middle of the room, and in a tone of voice that at once secured marked attention, said: 'Gentlemen, I've been a-noticing how things have been working here for some time, and I aint half satisfied. I don't want to raise a fuss, but——' 'What's the matter, John?' inquired a half a dozen of us. 'What do you mean? Have I done anything to hurt your feelings?' 'Yes, you have; all of you have hurt my feelings; and I've just got this to say about it. Here's every gal in the room been kissed mighty nigh a dozen times apiece, and there's my wife, who I consider as likely as any of 'em, has not had a single kiss to-night; and I just tell you now, if she don't get as many kisses the balance of the time as any gal in the room, the man that slights her has got me to fight—that's all!' If Mrs. B— was alighted during the balance of the evening, we did not observe it. As for ourselves, we know that John had no fault to find with us individually, for any neglect on our part."



**JEREMY.**—Ha! ha! My dear sir, you'll kill me with laughter. The idea of a man being ready to fight, because people wouldn't kiss his wife: and he a bridegroom yet in his honeymoon! Yet I've no doubt it's true, every word of it. Faith! though I'm an old man, I almost wish I had been there.

**EDITOR.**—You'd have been younger, if you had been there, my old friend; for this happened twenty years ago. Twenty years ago, in the good old days.

**JEREMY.**—Ah! happy times, which we shall never see again: and *apropos* of them, hear what this editor says. He is deploring the fact that, in our degenerate days, so many women have to remain unmarried, most of whom are thrown on the world to lead a life of penury or vice. "This false state of things," he says, "this increase of bachelordom and old-maidhood is solely owing to the extravagance of the age—to the false training of woman and to the observance, particularly in this country, of an absurd system engendered by avarice, which in most instances forbids the husband receiving a dowry with his wife until after her father's death. This is in fact the main spring of all the evil, which commencing its erratic workings in what is termed the upper classes, gradually descends downward to the most humble." Right, sir, right, (*Editor nods his head approvingly.*) "We will show how it works. The father of a family of daughters, has risen, after years of struggling, to a position of wealth. His daughters are educated in the most finished manner—are highly accomplished, and at a marriageable age they expect to meet with men, ready to take them for their wives; but they have been taught to expect that their husbands will maintain them in the same style they have been used to in their parent's home. They are seen and admired by eligible young men—that is, by young men whose talents and industry have secured to them a sufficient income to support themselves in a gentlemanly manner. These men would be willing to take upon themselves the yoke of matrimony; but they dare not." True as gospel! (*Jeremy stamps his foot energetically as he says this.*) "What are the few thousands of dollars they may possess to the hundreds of thousands possessed by the parents of the ladies? How can it be expected that they should suddenly jump into wealth, which it has taken their elders a life-time to accumulate? And yet they know that not a dollar of this wealth will be disgorged to help the daughter and her husband, after she has left her father's house. The young couple must wait for dead men's shoes, a proverbially uncertain expecta-

tion, and meanwhile the husband at toil andmd the wife must whirl round in the vortex of fashion—as if her husband were already a man of unexhaustable wealth! Is it a wonder that knowing this, the young men of the present age should shrink from the burden of matrimony? The less wealthy copy after their so-called superiors, and the same feeling permeates through all classes of society. Everywhere, except in rare instances, the daughters of the family are educated and trained to expect to support a more fashionable position than the men can afford to maintain them in. It may be said that the man should consider that he possesses a fortune and a jewel in his wife—and should scorn paltry pelf, when it comes in juxtaposition with love. This is all very pretty and poetical; but there is an old, trite and true saying—that 'when poverty comes in at the door, love flies out of the window.' In olden times when the aims of our ancestors were less exalted as regards the mere style of living, bachelorhood and old-maidhood were the exceptions to the general rule—now marriage bids fair soon to be the exception. If all young women were married at an early age there would be no need of the outcry we have spoken of—that is, if they would consent to abjure fashion and embrace comfort instead, as their grandmothers did before them; and we confidently assert that the only true remedies for the widely spread evil which leaves so many poor women unprotected and uncared for, to eke out a miserable existence, little short of alarming starvation, is for society to return to the divine and natural law—which bids every man take to himself, as Adam did, at first, a wife. Woman's sphere is essentially different from that of man, and man and woman can only in that way become assimilated."

**EDITOR.**—There's more sound sense in that article than I've seen in any one, on the same subject, for many a day. Mrs. Stephens would endorse every word of it.

**JEREMY.**—God bless her! Ah! sir, *she* is a writer, who is an honor to American literature, and, what is better, to human nature itself.

**EDITOR.**—She never writes a line that can bring a blush to the cheek of beauty, or that even indirectly suggests vice or impropriety. I have seen, however, in other writers, and those quoted by a certain set as moral *par excellence*, the most voluptuous pictures, and such as would have disgraced Sue. I believe, on my soul, that Mrs. Stephens would rather cut off her right hand than pen what she thinks vicious, indelicate, or even coarse.

**JEREMY.**—And what a story is her "Orphans

from the Alms-House!" Dear uncle Nat, fiery-haired Salina, sweet Mary Fuller:—what a trio! Don't you think it the best novel she has written?

EDITOR.—She has written so many good ones, that I scarcely know to which to award the palm. (*Takes up a newspaper carelessly.*) But excuse me! Jeremy: are you a "Know Nothing?"

JEREMY.—(*With great gravity.*) A "Know Nothing!"—I hope sincerely not. I don't know much, I grant; but to know nothing at all would be disgraceful.

EDITOR.—I mean a political "Know Nothing."

JEREMY.—Oh! of politics I know Nothing, and never wish to: I vote quietly on election days, as a patriot ought: but I ask no questions of others for conscience sake, and suffer none to be asked of me.

EDITOR.—Well, neither am I a politician, nor do I allow politics to be talked in this *sanctum*, much less inserted in the Magazine, which, as a lady's periodical, has no right to discuss such subjects.

JEREMY.—No more right than a man has to talk politics in a friend's parlor, which is about the worst bit of ill manners of which a gentleman can be guilty.

EDITOR.—We agree, I see. So, as you won't think I'm talking politics, but only reading a good joke to you, about a husband who went to a "Know Nothing" Lodge—listen. "Mrs. Soberly," says the Waterville Mail, "went to bed precisely at nine o'clock, thinking it passing strange that her good man had not made his appearance just ten minutes before. Of course he would be home in a minute and a half, or two minutes at furthest, and so Mrs. Soberly left a lamp burning on the hall table. There it burnt and burnt—but she must tell her own story, as she told it next morning to her confidential friends: 'Well, there the lamp burnt and burnt, till as near as I can guess, 'twas well nigh on to ten o'clock, and that man hadn't come! What to make out I didn't know no mor'n the dead—for he hadn't never been out so before, since the time they had such a fuss about the Aroostook war. Twan't no use to speak to the children, for they wouldn't know, and so after I had waited till I couldn't wait no longer, I bounced out of bed, and down stairs I went. I went right into the buttery and raised the window toward Mr. Blank's, and says I, 'Mrs. Blank!' In a minute I heard her jump out of bed and raise the window—and says she, 'Why, Mrs. Soberly, what on earth's the matter?' 'Matter!' says I—speaking low because I didn't want any body to hear—'matter! Mrs. Blank, do tell me if you have seen anything of my husband!'

'Your husband!' says she, 'you didn't suppose I'd got him, did you?' and then speaking almost in a whisper, says she, 'Look here—what on earth does this mean? have you seen anything of my husband?' Then we both begun to think something *had* happened, certainly, and in about two minutes I was dressed and over to Mrs. Blank's. Well, we concluded to step over to Mr. Quiet's, and start him out for a search; but we hadn't got half way across the street, talking along, when we heard the window shove up, and Mrs. Quiet, says she, 'Who's there?' Says I, 'It's me.' 'Well,' says she, 'do for pity's sake, tell me if you have seen anything of my husband?' Now wasn't here a pretty pickle? Well, to make a long matter short, we went up that street clear to the school-house, and back on t'other side, and not a woman did we find but what was wondering *what had become of her husband?* Well, just as we got to our gate, who should we see there but my husband and Mr. Blank! 'Mr. Soberly,' says I, a little spunky, 'will you just tell me what all this means?' 'What it means,' says he, just as cool as if nothing had happened—'well, Mrs. Soberly—ahem—I should be very glad to gratify you, if I could, but the truth is—ahem—that I don't know Nothing about it!' Well, from that time to this, I go to bed when I get ready, without asking any questions; and if I find Mr. Soberly there in the morning, that's all I care for—for I'd just give him to know that I'm as good a *Know Nothing* as he is."

JEREMY.—Capital! What fun some of these country editors have.

EDITOR.—Yes! and a humor often, in applying stories, that reminds me of Franklin. Here, for instance, is the way the editor of the Newberry Sentinel, a Carolinian paper, illustrates the folly of trying to escape unavoidable evils, and inculcates the superior wisdom of making the best of them at once. "We remember," he says, "to have heard an anecdote of a man in the upper portion of Georgia, and who had never been beyond the confines of his native state. He was a member of the Baptist church, and an excellent man too, but was worried almost out of his life by a very fussy brother of his church, by the name of Johnson, who it seems was always preferring charges against some one. Vexed to distraction, he left to seek a more quiet place. Here he found a *Johnson*. He went to Savannah, to Charleston; in each of these places he found *Johnsons*. In disgust he made for Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York; here again he found, after stopping awhile, *Johnsons*. Fretted and vexed, he concluded to go to a celebrated minister

in New York, and confer with him. He did so, and after stating his troubles, the minister calmly said to him: "My dear brother, go back home and make yourself quiet, for there are *Johnsons* in every part of the world." Now, isn't that like old Ben?

JEREMY.—Yes! And here's something good, though in a different way. I read from one of your Pennsylvania exchanges: it's an excellently pithy lecture to young ladies. "A friend of ours who had been long absent," says the editor, under the head of *How To Dress*, "returned recently, and called upon two beautiful young ladies of his acquaintance. One came quickly to greet him in the neat, yet not precise attire, in which she was performing her household duties. The other, after the lapse of half an hour, made her stately appearance, in all the paraphernalia of starch and ribbons with which, on the announcement of his entrance, she had bedecked herself. Our friend, who was long hesitating in his choice between the two, now hesitated no longer. The cordiality with which the first hastened to greet him, and the charming carelessness of her attire, entirely won his heart. She is now his wife. Young ladies, take warning from the above, and never refuse to see a friend because you have on your wash-gown. The true gentleman will not think less of you because he finds you in the performance of your duties."

EDITOR.—My popular contributor, Ellen Ash-

ton, ought to have known that incident. What a story she would have made of it!

JEREMY.—Ah! but you're a lucky man; for your contributors are all good; and as varied in their several walks as it is possible for contributors to be. The ladies, up our way, always read your Magazine first. Indeed, some of the others they never read at all, but look at the pictures and then give them to "baby" to tear up. You are going to have—let me tell you in your ear—treble the list from our town you had last year. Some ladies said, at first, that they couldn't afford to subscribe to any Magazine for next year; but the post-master told them that yours was just the thing for them, as it gave as much for two dollars as others gave for three: "if you want to economize," he said, "take Peterson's, or, in fact, take Peterson's whether or no as the best of all." And I endorsed what he said, (*Jeremy briskly emphasizes his words, striking the floor with his cane, which he has taken up,*) for I happened to be at the post-office getting my letters.

EDITOR.—Thank you! Thank you! But I'll promise you, and all others of our friends, that your kindness shall not be thrown away. We'll surprise you, Jeremy, next year: such a Magazine as we'll have was never seen! Excuse this word about myself. You'll dine with me of course: and it's now about the hour. (*They both go out.*)

## THE SECOND MARRIAGE.

BY MARY L. MEANY.

THREE young ladies were sitting together, busily engaged in plying their crochet needles, and remarking upon a visitor who had just left them.

"Oh, did you notice," said the eldest of the group, "how she colored and looked down when I *chanced* to allude to the report concerning the handsome widower who has been honoring our city with a visit?"

"Did we notice it? Why, of course, we did. And how cleverly you managed it, too;" and all three laughed heartily at the recollection. "Ah, Bessie, you are a sly one. No one would dream by your manner that you were perfectly aware not only that the rumor of Mr. Clinton's new engagement is true, but that the very person to whom you were so energetically expressing yourself against second marriages is the bride-elect—the second Mrs. Clinton soon to be."

"Yes, it is too bad," said Fanny, "to think that Bessie can look so innocent and unconscious, and she plotting mischief as fast as she can; while you and I, Kate, can scarce maintain an appearance of gravity. I am sure if Miss Rivers had but looked at us she would have suspected that we were all in a plot against her."

"There was no danger of her looking at any one," returned Bessie, "it was as much as she could think of to try to hide her confusion. I am so glad that I had an opportunity of telling her my views of the matter; I do so despise a girl that marries a *widower*."

As the gay girl looked up she perceived that another person had entered the room, a tall, elegant-looking lady dressed in a walking costume, and holding her bonnet carelessly in her hand, while she stood regarding the trio with a quiet smile. All three gave a start of surprise.

"Why, cousin Florence, where on earth did you come from?"

"Only from a short walk with your mamma. But don't let me interrupt your conversation, I had no idea, when I stole in to give you a little surprise, that I should find you so pleasantly and profitably employed."

The two younger girls blushed a little at the slight reproof, but Bessie gaily replied,

"Come now, coz, no raillery nor reproving looks, if you please, for I must always say what

I think, and I *do* think that a man who forgets his wife almost as soon as she is laid in the grave, and goes about looking for some girl to take her place in his heart and his home, is only deserving of *contempt*, and the foolish girl that marries him is, if possible, more *despicable*."

"But you will exempt some from this censure, surely, Bessie; there are exceptions to all rules, you know, and——"

"No, I will allow no exception, nor exempt any one from the censure which such conduct merits," hastily interrupted Bessie. "I thought I should like Edith Rivers very much when I was first introduced to her, and was sorry that her stay among us was to be of brief duration; but since I have heard that she is to marry Mr. Clinton, I don't care anything about her."

"You have seen him, I suppose," said Florence Danville, eyeing her companion curiously.

"Only at a distance. He was pointed out to me at a concert last week just before he left the city, I believe; but I merely glanced toward him, for I had no desire to see a frisky old widower."

Mrs. Danville laughed aloud as she asked, "Is he so old?"

"Yes, he must be forty at the least."

"Oh, nonsense!" exclaimed Kate and Fanny together. "Thirty, at the most, you had better say. I am sure he is not over thirty."

"Always two sides to a story," said Florence, "and I suppose the majority is correct. What a pity I remained so long in Baltimore. I should like to see the so-much-talked-of gentleman. And the bride-elect too, I missed seeing her by going out this morning."

"Oh, I expect you will see her at aunt Fanny's to-morrow night, we are all invited, and I heard that Miss Rivers is to be there."

"I cannot be one of the company," said Florence. "To-morrow night will find me many miles from here."

"Why, where are you going now, cousin? You only returned from Baltimore day before yesterday, and now you're going away again. You shall not go; indeed you must not," and the three sisters gathered around her with pleading looks.

"Many thanks for your kind wish to detain me, dear girls, but I must go this time. 'The

bride-clothes are making, the bride-cake is baking,' and I must away to the wedding."

"So it is a wedding—then of course you must go; but why did you not tell us this sooner, Florence?"

"Simply because I did not know it myself, until on returning home this morning I found a letter from my cousin, who is one of the parties, insisting on being favored with my presence on the important day. As soon as I had penned a brief answer, I came to tell you all about it."

"Oh, do tell us now, cozy!" pleaded Kate. "Tell us who they are, and let us have the story, for there is one, I know; perhaps a 'romance in real life.'"

"But, I must not tell the story—if there is one, before Bessie," said Mrs. Danville, smiling, "for I shall at once excite her hostility against my poor hero, by confessing that he is—a widower. Indeed it was of him I thought, when she was so uncharitably declaiming against second marriages."

"Oh, forgive me, I pray, if I hurt your feelings by my remarks, cousin. I did not reflect that they might apply to any of your friends. As a penance I will promise to listen with all attention to your story, and to become a convert to your theory of exceptions, if you show sufficient cause. So now for the story. Once upon a time—there is a commencement for you."

"Well, then, once upon a time a young gentleman of prepossessing appearance and manners, good business prospects, and so on, went on a journey of some hundreds of miles, and was returning home without having met with any adventure, when accidentally encountering an old family acquaintance, he accepted his cordial invitation to spend a few weeks at his pleasant country residence. Here he was introduced to a young lady, the niece of his host, a pretty, fairy-like creature, just released from the restraints of school, and so timid and diffident that Albert Morris was first induced to pay her particular attention, with the benevolent desire of overcoming the shyness that seemed to oppress her painfully in his presence. As I have already said, Albert was possessed of polished and agreeable manners, and his winning address soon had the desired effect of rendering the timid Effie as much at ease in his society as if he were an old friend.

"And now he was surprised to find in one whom he had looked only as a simple, modest school girl a mind of no common order, which had been carefully cultivated by her excellent uncle, and what charmed him yet more, a deep, though quiet enthusiasm, an elevation of senti-

ment and principle that were his almost reverential admiration. The few weeks to which he had limited his visit, were more than doubled on account of a slight accident which befell him while roaming over the hills with Effie in botanical researches; and it was during the irksome confinement to the house which this occasioned, that the love already twining about his heart acquired strength and fervor. For his amusement, to solace and beguile his hours of pain or weariness, all the rich, fresh powers of her nature were ungrudgingly devoted; nor was it long till he discovered that the gentle girl was all unconsciously conceiving a deeper sentiment than friendship for the attractive stranger who had thus become, as it were, domesticated in the family. In short, it was a mutual attachment; but if this thought sometimes caused the young man a sudden thrill of delight, this was as suddenly banished by another reflection.

"Far away in the home where parents and brothers and sisters counted the days impatiently until the wanderer's return, another waited his coming with eagerness less freely expressed, yet far more absorbing than theirs. His fair young foster-sister—the favorite companion of his childish sports, now the betrothed of his early manhood—how her sweet image would arise between him and the charming, too charming Effie—how vividly he recalled the hour when they exchanged the vows of love so long cherished—his eager appeal to his parents to sanction his affection for the orphan child of their dearest friend—his rapture when that sanction was freely given, when he looked on earth's fairest, dearest treasure as his own! And only a few months had passed since then; preparations were going forward for his marriage, which was to take place the week after his return home; yet now he shrank from the thought of that which he had regarded as the consummation of his happiness, for he could not disguise from himself how far his attachment to Effie transcended that which he felt for his betrothed.

"And poor Morris, with his honorable, high-principled nature and generous heart was now in sad trouble. The sweetness of the dream was past; and now he awoke to the consciousness of the necessity of crushing down with a martyr's resolution the pleasant thoughts and fancies he had been inadvertently cherishing. And not only this—were he alone the sufferer he thought he could willingly bear the punishment due to his fickleness; but in performing the painful duty which was before him, he felt that he must also inflict agony on the unsuspecting Effie.

"He could not hesitate longer, however, and

on the day that he regained the use of his injured limb, he made his few preparations for leaving the place, which in his secret thoughts he regarded as an earthly Paradise. After tea he strolled out with Effie, her uncle and aunt accompanying them for a little distance; but after a time they wandered into another path, and the young people soon lost sight of them.

"It was a trying moment for poor Morris. He knew not how to commence the explanation he felt it his duty to give to his companion, and was strongly tempted to say nothing, but to leave a letter on his departure which should tell all.

"Then he reflected that it would be more difficult to write on the subject than even to speak; so at last, when they had reached a wide spreading oak, beneath whose friendly shelter they had passed many pleasant moments, he motioned to Effie to rest upon the rustic seat close by, while he, leaning against the shaggy trunk, told the brief history of his life—his betrothal to one he had deemed the embodiment of all that he could desire in his bride, until chance had introduced to him a bright, young being, in whose society he, for a time, forgot that he was already pledged to another. But he spoke not as of himself, but as if of a friend whose perplexities he had heard of; for Albert found that thus he could more freely enter into the details of his story, and express in unmeasured terms the indignation he really felt against such inconstancy, brief and unintentional though it was, yet not the less censurable for its cruel thoughtlessness.

"When he had finished and waited with a sinking heart for Effie's reply, the fair girl, never suspecting that it was his own history to which she had given such earnest attention, looked up with her soft, truthful eyes, as she artlessly replied,

"How unfortunate and much to-be-pitied is your friend, but I do not see why he should blame himself so severely; or why you seem to be so indignant against him, for——"

"She stopped abruptly, for a sudden breeze dashed to and fro the bough whose friendly obscurity Albert had sought, and the clear moonbeams shone on a face so strangely agitated that Effie could not utter another word. A suspicion of the truth seemed to dart into her mind; she rose involuntarily and stood before him with an inquiring, though mournful gaze. Albert groaned aloud as he met that look.

"Do not look upon me so, sweet Effie," he murmured, hoarsely, "that gentle glance falls like a blight on my guilty soul. Effie, I—I am the villain of whom I have been telling you."

"He bowed his head upon his hands, unwilling

to witness the effect of his words on the innocent, sportive maiden, to whom he was thus bringing the first acquaintance with sorrow. He did not look up again, till a light touch on his arm demanded his attention, then he saw that Effie had been weeping in the interim, but now, save for a slight quivering of the full lips, she was calm, and a lofty expression was in the beautiful eyes raised serenely to his.

"Do not reproach yourself for what is passed, Albert—Mr. Morris; you were not to blame, and though we must meet no more, I will always pray God to bless you. Good bye."

"She extended her hand; he pressed it passionately for the first, last time to his lips, but when he would have retained it in his own, and led her back to the house, she said, hurriedly, and in trembling tones,

"I make but one request, Mr. Morris, please leave me. I wish to remain here for a time, alone."

"And withdrawing her hand as she spoke, she turned away, and Albert rushed from the spot, wandering about at a distance, until at length he saw that girlish form emerge into the clear moonlight. Then he turned and walked in silence by her side, until they reached the garden-gate; he opened it, and she passed in, and was soon again within the house which she had left a brief time ago, a happy, joyous girl, unconscious of the blow that was to crush her fair young hopes.

"Albert took leave of his kind entertainers at an early hour of the following day. He longed to see Effie, if but for a moment, before his departure, but was told that she had a nervous headache, and could not leave her room. After lingering till the stage came to the door, in the vain expectation of being able to bid her adieu, he snatched up a pen and wrote,

"Effie, farewell; I am going now—will you forgive me, and pray for me when I am far away?"

"This brief farewell note he despatched to Effie's room, and in a moment received her answer, traced in trembling characters,

"Farewell, forever! Effie has nothing to forgive, but she will pray for you always. Farewell, and heaven protect you on your journey."

"Thus they parted. Albert began his homeward journey with saddened spirits, but he schooled his mind to the hard task of forgetfulness, and when he pressed his blushing Ada to his heart, it was with an affection pure and devoted as he had vowed to her, though shorn of a portion of its boyish fervency. They were married. Ada, though she possessed not the rare accomplish-

ments nor heroic nature of Effie, was a tender and devoted wife, and she never perceived any diminution of her husband's earnest regard, nor felt a pang which his solicitude and care could avert.

"Several happy years went by. Then the death of Albert's mother brought sorrow to that peaceful dwelling. Ada had loved her adopted mother with more than a daughter's tenderness, knowing that she had no natural claim to the kindness which had been lavished on her in the home that had received her in the desolation of her orphanage. During the long illness of old Mrs. Morris, no persuasion could induce her to remit her zealous attendance by the death-bed, but when all was over, exhausted by her unaccustomed exertions, added to her own grief and sympathy for her husband's filial sorrow, her health gave way, and for a long time medical skill and assiduous care seemed unavailing.

"Albert tended his suffering Ada with a tender and unwearying devotedness, which her friends and servants still love to expatiate on; and he was rewarded by seeing the faint glow of returning health adorn her wan and death-like countenance. At length she was pronounced entirely out of danger, and he felt no uneasiness on leaving home to attend to business of consequence which had already been too much neglected. He would be absent only two days, and he left her with many tender adieus, and cautions to be careful of her returning strength, and to expect him back on the third day. He returned at the appointed time—returned to find his wife dying. A rumor of a fearful railroad accident had reached one of the servants, who thoughtlessly rushed to her mistress with the dreadful intelligence, coupled with her own belief, that 'that was the very train Mr. Morris went by.' The shock was too great for the delicate invalid, and she lived only long enough to be comforted by seeing her beloved husband return in safety to his home. She died, and he mourned her death with a grief of which she was worthy.

"Two years have passed since her decease, and it is to Albert's marriage with Effie that I am now invited. They never met during the years that followed their painful separation, and only a few months since my cousin told me all the circumstances I have related, asking my opinion of the purpose he had begun to entertain of renewing his acquaintance with Effie, who he had heard was still living unmarried at her uncle's. I answered that I thought it was due both to himself and her that he should do so; and it appears that his opinion coincided with mine. And now, girls, I have finished my narrative;

have I not shown sufficient cause why Bessie should change her opinion of second marriages?"

"Yes, you have; she must make an exception in favor of your cousin and his lady fair," exclaimed Kate and Fanny; and Bessie joining in their merriment, frankly admitted that she would make no objection to the contemplated wedding, but wished the happy pair all possible happiness, as she thought they merited. Mrs. Danville expressed her appreciation of the ready concession and kind wishes.

"But you have not finished the story, after all, Florence; tell us how the match was made up at last, and all that."

"Inquisitive Kate! Well, I will try to find out the particulars, and give them as the concluding chapter of my story at our next meeting."

Their next meeting was at Newport, where the sisters on reaching the hotel were rejoiced by the unexpected presence of their cousin Florence. As soon as the first glad greetings had been exchanged, they asked for news of the bridal, which Florence had refrained from giving in her letters to them.

"Oh, the bride and groom are fine," said she, glancing around the parlor; "yes, there they are—let me introduce you." And leading the way to a fine-looking man standing beside a lady, whom at first glance they recollected as *Miss Rivers*, the sisters were formally presented to *Mr. and Mrs. Clinton*. Kate and Fanny not having much "power of face," showed their astonishment, but Bessie retained her usual self-possession, taking revenge by bantering Florence on the first opportunity on her "very clever attempt at romance making."

"Nay, but it was the plain, unadorned truth I gave you," laughed Florence; "only I took some liberty with the names of the parties, not much either, for Effie was Mr. Rivers' pet name for his niece, and my cousin's full name is Albert Morris Clinton."

"But the concluding chapter of your true story," said Kate.

"Yes," I promised to give it, but as you know the demouement, of what interest would be the details of the renewal of their acquaintance. It was brought about by a letter from Albert to Mr. Rivers, informing him of previous circumstances, and soliciting his permission to address Effie. The old gentleman willingly assented, and thus in the usual matter-of-fact way was the match made up. Charles and I were of the favored few who witnessed the marriage, and came on to Newport with the happy pair. Now, candidly, Bessie, what do you think of the 'frisky old widower' and his second bride?"

“Just what I thought at first,” was the gay reply. “I retract my former retraction, since I have discovered the cheat you practised upon us.”

But, notwithstanding this assertion, Bessie and Effie (as she was still called) were soon warm friends, and the former was often bantered by her well-pleased cousin and sisters, on the propriety of sometimes “changing an opinion.”

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## CHRISTMAS IN THE OLDEN TIME.

BY E. K. SMITH.

CHRISTMAS in the Olden Time! At the very name, what visions are called up to the mind's eye of gay parties bringing in the Yule-log; of the rousing wassail-bowl; of Mumming and Masking; of the Boar's-head decked with holly; and of the arrival of the Christmas guest at the old Manor House, in an old-fashioned snow-storm, with servitors lighting him with torches to the door, where the squire, in spite of the tempest, stands ready to receive him.

Most of these old customs have been long disused even in England, while few of them ever existed at all in America. As the pastimes of our ancestors, however, they have an interest to us, which the frequent allusions of the poets have increased. We will consecrate a page or two, therefore, to an account of the ancient games, customs, and observances of Christmas-time, so graphically alluded to in the well known lines of Scott.

"The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,  
Went roaring up the chimney side,  
The hugo hall-table's onken face,  
Scraped till it shone the day of grace,  
Bore then upon its massive board  
No mark to part the squire and lord.  
Then was brought on the lusty brawn  
By old blue-coated serving-man.  
Then the grim boar's-head frown'd on high,  
Deck'd out with bays and rosemary.  
Well can the green-garb'd ranger tell  
How, when, and where the monster fell;  
What dogs before his death he tore,  
And all the baiting of the boar;  
While round the merry wassail-bowl,  
Garnish'd with ribbon, blythe did trowl."

The custom of adorning houses, churches, &c., with branches of MISTLETOE, HOLLY, and other winter shrubs and trees, is perhaps of older date than any other Christmas observance. It had its origin in England with the Druids, who were the priests of the ancient Britons long previous to the invasion of this country by the Romans, under Julius Cæsar. It was their wont, at a certain period of the year, to resort to the forests in which grew the largest oak trees, followed by a great concourse of people of all degrees. There, with many ceremonies, they proceeded to cut down a quantity of the branches of the mistletoe growing on the oaks, which, having divided into small pieces, they distributed amongst the religious students and votaries who had accompanied

them, and who, considering these branches as so many emblems of good fortune, adorned their dwellings with them. There was a sacredness attached to the custom which preserved its practice for a long period, and we find it mentioned in many of the old records. A peculiar sanctity was attached to the Mistletoe.

"Christmas, the joyous period of the year!  
Now bright with Holly all the temples strew,  
With Laurel green, and sacred Mistletoe."

This Druidical custom appears to have survived the shock attending the incursions of foreign races, and the overthrow of the old established religion; and Christianity, loth to wage war with every ancient usage, consented to retain this one as the most innocent of them all. Indeed, green boughs seem to have been almost universally looked upon as emblems of purity. Stowe, the old English chronicler, relates that not only the parish church, public offices, and houses were adorned with holme, ivy, hays, and other greens of the season, but that conduits and standards in the streets were likewise garnished.

The custom of burning the Yule-Log was, it appears, of Anglo-Saxon origin. That race of people were in the habit of celebrating a feast at the winter solstice, which they called the Juul, or Yule, and on this occasion they were wont to burn a large log of wood, as an emblem of returning light and heat, the sun being then at its furthest point from them. From that feast the burning of the log became transferred to the eve of Christmas Day; and, as such, was never omitted up to the early part of the present century. It is now rarely met with, and then only in very remote rural districts.

The YULE-LOG was the stem of one of the largest trees that could be found on the estate of the proprietor in whose halls it was to raise its cheerful flame. It was hewn down on the Candlemas Day, in the month of February of the same year; then kindled where it fell, and suffered to burn until sunset, when the fire was extinguished, and the log laid in a proper place until it was required at Christmas. At the appointed time it was carried into the mansion hall by a number of domestics, amidst much rejoicing, and kindled on the hearth with no little mirth and merry-making. It was generally large enough to

last during that night and the whole of the following day.

The WASSAIL-BOWL, like the Yule-Log, had its origin amongst our Saxon forefathers. In the old legend of Vortigern and Rowena, we find the first mention of the custom of *Wassailing*. At a feast given by Hengist, the Saxon chief, to Vortigern, the British King, the royal guest was bewitched with the charms of the young and beautiful daughter of his entertainer. While on her knee, the fair Saxon damsel presented the wine-cup to the British monarch, exclaiming—“Liever Kyning Wass-hael!” or, as we should express, “Your health, lord king!” Vortigern, not understanding the custom, had it explained to him by one of his suite, who tells him, according to the poetical legend, that it was a compliment paid him by the fair maid:—

“Ik man that love where him think,  
Shall say, ‘Wasshail!’ and to him drink.  
He that drinks shall say Wasshail:  
And t’other shall say again, Drinkhail!  
That says Wasshail, drinks of the cup;  
Kissing his fellow, he drinks it up.”

The Saxons were never without handing round a drinking or pledge-cup, or Wassail-bowl, at all their feasts; and, in course of time, this practice became transferred to the Christmas festivities, now only recognized in the custom of drinking healths or toasts.

The WAITS, or Christmas Bards, are a remnant of the old minstrels attached to courts and cities, and who added to their musical offices the more important, though less pleasant, duty of watching and guarding the streets. They perambulated the principal thoroughfares in small parties, crying the hour at each corner, or street, or lane; and inasmuch as in those remote days—during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—our cities were not lit up at night by anything like lamps, these Waits carried beacons, or large fires, supported upon high poles. Their office appears to have fallen into disuse during the reign of Henry VIII.; and subsequently, the watchmen established on a better footing, exercised their

musical powers only at Christmas-time; and hence, the practice of bands of nocturnal musicians in England, still perambulating streets at this season, in “the witching hour of night.”

MUMMERS, or Masked Players, seem to have derived their name from the Danish *Mumme*, or the Dutch *Momme*, to mask; and there is reason to believe that this custom of dressing and masking had its origin in the practice of exchanging clothes between men and women, at the *Saturnalia*, a feast of the Romans. The Mummings of the early ages appear to have been of both sexes; and, being dressed in strange costume and masked, went about at feast-times, from house to house, reciting verses and singing songs.

MASQUES were a species of play, formerly exhibited in the Inns of Court. One of these entertainments was exhibited in the Inner Temple, in the fourth year of the reign of Elizabeth, in which the celebrated Leicester, then Lord Robert Dudley, was the principal actor. During the Christmas of 1601, we read that the Twelfth-Night of Shakspeare was performed in the hall of the Middle Temple. In the reign of Elizabeth and James I., these Masques were most popular, and oftentimes got up at great expense. During the latter reign, Masques were performed at Whitehall, by the principal nobles of the court.

The LORD OF MISRULE was an officer appointed in all large establishments, to superintend the arrangements for the Christmas revels. In Scotland, he was called the *Abbot of Unreason*: whilst, at the Universities, where festivities at Christmas were always rife, he took the title of *Imperator*. The authority of this dignitary began upon All-Hallows Eve, and terminated at the end of the twelve days of Christmas.

BEAR-BAITING, or worrying of bears by dogs, formed another pastime, which, although indulged in by all ranks at other times of the year, was nevertheless one of the sports which constituted the Christmas festivities of the times of Elizabeth.

## MRS. BOSTWICK'S ECONOMY.

BY ELLEN ASHTON.

"DEAR me," exclaimed Mrs. Bostwick, "did you ever see things so cheap as they are this fall? I was in at Jones', the other day, and actually saw beautiful French handkerchiefs at fifty cents, that were worth a dollar, and black silks at a dollar a yard that were never before sold for less than a dollar and a half. The store was full of bargains. People were buying so fast that they could hardly get waited on. Such fancy silks as there were also; the most beautiful patterns you ever saw; and sold for literally nothing, yes! literally nothing."

Mrs. Bostwick was making a morning call on Mrs. Freehold, one of her acquaintances, when she broke forth into this eulogy on cheap goods. Her friend replied,

"Mr. Freehold says that a great many goods have been sacrificed at auction this year, which is the reason for their cheapness. Too much foreign merchandise was imported, and as many persons couldn't hold over their stocks till spring, they were compelled to sell them for whatever they would fetch. In one sense it is a great blessing, for if marketing continues to keep so high, I don't know what poor folks would do, were it not that all articles of clothing are so very low."

"Yes! dear me," replied Mrs. Bostwick, "only to think how small the loaves of the bakers are. Potatoes, too, at a dollar a bushel, when I bought them, last year, for sixty cents, and often used to get them for forty. Coal at six dollars a ton, and but two thousand pounds at that, as Mr. Bostwick says, instead of twenty-two hundred. It's perfectly frightful. I don't know what the poor *will* do this winter. It's a time when everybody ought to economize. I said so to our minister, when he took tea with us the other night. 'It's awful,' says I; and says he, 'it is, indeed, Mrs. Bostwick;' and says I, 'they do say ten thousand people will be out of employment in this city, alone, this winter;' and says he, 'the Lord help them;' and I said, says I, 'we ought all to be as economical as we can, so as to give alms;' and he said at once, beautifully, says he, 'you know, Mrs. Bostwick, whose giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord.' You've heard him preach, haven't you? He's such a sweet speaker."

"A most excellent man," answered Mrs. Freehold, gravely, though secretly amused at her

friend's way of telling her story, "I know no one, whose ministry I would sooner sit under, than our own dear pastor was to leave us."

"So I've been practising economy ever since," resumed Mrs. Bostwick. "I haven't bought a thing anywhere else than at Jones'; and don't intend to, the whole season. I bought some lovely cassimere for the boys, the other day; and some merino, oh! you don't know how cheap. But they're expensive things as well as common ones, and all for little more than half of what they're worth. I must show you my handkerchief," she continued, tendering an elegantly embroidered one to Mrs. Freehold; "it came from Jones'. Last winter, a year ago, Mrs. Rogers bought one there, not a bit better, for ten dollars; and for this I gave only six. See how beautifully the work is done in those corners."

"It is certainly very handsome," replied her hostess, having examined it, "and quite cheap."

"Yes, that's why I bought it. I didn't need it at all, but I couldn't let it slip; for I knew, if I did, Mrs. Rogers would take it directly. The Rogerses will live, you know; the wonder is how they stand it: but they do say that Mr. Rogers came near breaking, this fall, and only got through by paying two per cent for his money."

"Mrs. Rogers seems like an amiable woman," answered the charitable Mrs. Freehold, "and I'm sorry to hear it: let us hope it is not true." And being averse to idle gossiping, she made a remark on the State Fair, which had then just taken place, hoping to change the conversation.

But Mrs. Bostwick was not to be balked. She insisted it was all true, "every word of it," and that she had no doubt "there'll be a grand smash up there some day," and having discharged, in this way, her secret envy at Mrs. Rogers, she returned again to the question of cheap goods.

"I don't know but what it would be a good plan," she said, "to buy everything one wants next spring now, I mean everything that would be seasonable. I never saw goods so cheap, and I suppose they'll not be so again, very soon. Your husband is an importer, Mrs. Freehold. What does he think?"

"He says it's impossible to tell how they'll be next spring. I believe, however, he inclines to look on this fall in prices as apt to last over next

season; that is for many descriptions of goods. He says immense quantities of goods are bonded, as he calls it: that is already imported, but locked up in the custom-house warehouses till next spring. If he is correct in his idea, there will be as many goods sold at auction six months hence as now, and consequently prices will be just as low."

"Well, it may be so," answered Mrs. Bostwick, but evidently inclined to think differently. "Yet, as I say to Mr. Bostwick, says I, 'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush;' and if things are going to be higher in the spring, it would be ridiculous not to buy plenty now. Only suppose one had known, two years ago, when coal could be bought for four dollars a ton, that it was going to be so high now:—why it would have paid to have bought enough to last for four or five years, or, if one hadn't room to keep so much, one might have sold it again at a profit. There's nothing like economy, Mrs. Freehold. As I say to my husband, 'it's not what a man makes, but what a wife saves, that leads to riches,' and I always try accordingly to be as economical as I can."

At this point another visitor came in, when Mrs. Bostwick's voluble tongue necessarily stopped for awhile; and before she could resume, her leisure was up; for suddenly hearing the clock strike, she started up, declaring that she had just time to get home to dinner, and so bustled out of the room, rustling her flashy brocade as she went.

A week or two afterward, Mrs. Freehold, having occasion to collect some money for a benevolent society to which she belonged, and which took it upon itself to seek deserving objects of charity, and to supply them with food and clothing in winter, bethought her of Mrs. Bostwick, as one who had emphatically expressed sympathy for the destitute, and declared her intention to economize in order to be able to give freely. It was not without some misgivings, however, that she departed on her errand, for she knew her acquaintance better than most people did: in fact, Mrs. Freehold was a superior woman in all respects, but especially acute in reading character quickly.

Mrs. Bostwick came down to receive her in an elegant parlor, in one of the fashionable streets of the city. The room was furnished as ninety-nine parlors in every hundred are; with mirrors, curtains, sofas, a piano, and the orthodox number of chairs; all arranged as exactly as they were in the nine and ninety other parlors. Upholstery reigned supreme in that flashy room. There were neither pictures, nor statuettes, nor even engravings or books. Half the money, which had

been expended on the brocatelle and rosewood furniture, if had been spent on a choice painting or two, would have thrown around the apartment an air of refined taste, as well as given it a character; for where the upholsterer directs everything, while the owner selects nothing, individuality, which ought to be the charm of every house, is utterly wanting. But we digress.

"I have come," said Mrs. Freehold, after the usual common-place civilities were exchanged, "to solicit your aid in behalf of our Benevolent Society. We find a good deal of distress, with the prospect of more as winter approaches, so that we shall be compelled to solicit assistance in every possible quarter. You spoke so feelingly of the destitute, when I last saw you, and expressed your resolution to be economical in order to have more money to spare in charity, that I have ventured to call on you among the first."

Mrs. Bostwick's countenance fell at the words which proclaimed her visitor's errand. When Mrs. Freehold had finished, she replied, with much embarrassment,

"Dear me, what a pity, for I'm as poor as a church mouse. Instead of having more money than usual to give away, I haven't a cent, positively not a cent."

Mrs. Freehold looked surprised.

"It's a fact," continued Mrs. Bostwick, coloring. "To tell the truth," she said, "my economy has proved no economy."

"How so?"

"Why, you see, I thought I'd buy a good many things, which we'd want after awhile; and then, as they were so very cheap, I bought some that we didn't want at all. Between the two, I found, when my bill came in, that I'd spent, not only as much as I did last fall, but half as much again."

"I'm very sorry," said Mrs. Freehold, gravely. "After what you said, I almost depended on you."

"Well, to be sure," answered Mrs. Bostwick, "I did expect to help the poor, this winter. But Mr. Bostwick says I've spent so much at Jones', that it will be impossible for him to give me a cent for charity. But really, Mrs. Freehold," she continued, apologetically, "what could I do? There were such beautiful plaid silks, which are all the rage, you know, for seventy-five cents a yard; and said the clerk, says he, 'they cost, ma'am, every cent of a dollar and ten cents to import.' Then there were ribbons at thirty-seven and a-half cents, which were worth, a year ago, sixty-two. They had gloves, too, for forty-four cents, such as I used to pay eighty-seven

for; and the clerk said, says he, 'you'd better take a dozen, Mrs. Bostwick, they fit you beautifully, and you'll never get such another chance.' It was a temptation, especially when I saw them going off faster almost than they could be paid for; and such crowds as there were! you had to wait for your turn to get attended to; half a dozen carriages at the door all the time. Though, of course, if I'd dreamed my bill was running up so high I would not have bought so many things. Mr. Bostwick was quite out of patience when it came, and said, says he, 'why, Ann, you'll never wear one-half these things, they'll be out of fashion before you can use them,' which, to be sure, is true enough, though I hadn't thought of that."

Mrs. Freehold, at this pause, rose to go, fear-

ing that if she waited for her hostess to recover breath, the voluble tongue of the good lady would not allow her to escape for an hour or more.

"So much for the economy of buying what one does not want," said Mrs. Freehold, as she left the house, "or even buying more than one wants, under the temptation of low prices. I really believe that more money is spent, when things are cheap, than at other times; there are so many Mrs. Bostwicks in the world."

In which opinion, dear reader, we coincide, and so will you, we believe, when you have reflected a little.

We have a score of acquaintances at least, who pique themselves on being prudent shoppers, yet who have been, all this fall, practising Mrs. BOSTWICK'S ECONOMY.

## MAY LATIMER'S CHOICE.

BY CARRY STANLEY.

"WHAT a bore to have to vegetate here all the vacation with old Latimer, because he is a friend of my father's, forsooth, instead of having a glorious time with the rest of the fellows, making love to the pretty girls, or indulging in any other harmless pastime," and Frank Thurlow's good-humored face wore as discontented an expression as it was possible for it to assume. "If that May was not such a Medusa, I'd even flirt with her, child as she is," and the young man of twenty who tried to think he was *blase* already, sauntered down the lawn, whistling the last new opera air. The fence which divided the green from the fine old apple orchard was soon scaled, and a gay laugh drew his attention to a little stream which run at the foot of the orchard. A huge Newfoundland dog, dripping from his recent aquatic excursion, came bounding up the slope, friking about in high spirits, and after him, laughing, and almost breathless, was May Latimer, with her light blue gingham bearing evident marks of the dog's proximity.

"Just look what Sancho's done, Mr. Thurlow," said the young girl, holding out her dress, as if half ashamed of being caught in that plight. "I was sitting under the tree, reading, and the first thing I knew, he was taking a comfortable turn on the skirt of my dress."

Frank Thurlow scrutinized the child more closely than he had ever done before. The playful chase after Sancho had brought a light color to her usually sallow cheek; her large grey eyes, the only handsome thing about her face, were almost black with merriment; her brown waving hair, which was never smoothe, looked, as she stood in the sunshine, as if it rippled over gold sands, and her long, thin, overgrown limbs assumed an attitude of unconscious grace, that made her companion think she was not *so very ugly* after all.

"You must have been very much interested 'in your book, May, not to have seen Sancho," said Frank, thinking he might as well amuse himself with her, as in any other way.

"Oh, yes, I always like it. I have read it over *ever* so many times," was the enthusiastic reply.

"Read *what*?" queried Frank, laughing.

"Why, the Arabian Nights, to be sure," answered May.

"Hem! I thought it was something about as useful. I heard that starched up old governess of yours, tell you the other day that you would surely be a dunce," said Thurlow, gravely.

The light faded from May Latimer's face in a moment, and she was nothing now but a sallow, awkward-looking hoyden.

"Well, *I* don't care," was the sullen, defiant answer, "I *do* hate your algebra, and your chemistry, and natural philosophy, and your botany, that pulls all the beautiful flowers to pieces."

"What do you like?" asked Frank, as he seated himself on the gnarled root of an old tree, and leaned back against the trunk, skying a green apple which he picked up, now and then into the stream.

"Nothing," was the sturdy reply, "but to hunt flowers and play with little Katie, and run in the fields with Sancho. Good bye, Mr. Thurlow, I'm going," and taking up her book, May was off, calling to Sancho, who in a few moments was seen again racing with his mistress.

Thurlow gazed after her for a few moments, with raised eye-brows, but soon forgetting this little episode, he passed the remainder of the morning stretched at full length on the grass, frightening the birds from the tree, by a shrill whistle, or imprisoning now and then a handful of grasshoppers.

May appeared at the dinner-table with pouting lips and swollen eyes; the governess, too, looked more than usually prim, and threw a double quantity of sternness in her voice, when she addressed either of the children.

"What's the matter, butter-cup?" asked Frank, pulling May's ear, as she seated herself on the step of the piazza, after dinner.

"I'll never write another 'composition' again, I will not; and I told Mrs. Bailey so," said the child, passionately, "she does nothing but pull all my essays to pieces, and make fun of them," and a burst of tears followed the confession.

Frank's good nature prompted him to assist May out of the difficulty.

"Come," replied he, soothingly, "show me what it is. I'll help you in spite of vinegar face,"

and taking her by the hand when he saw that she hesitated, he led her into a small room which he knew had been appropriated to her special use. May's "den," as he called it, was a good type of her unregulated mind. Sancho had evidently not wiped his feet, before marching across the white straw matting; Dick, the canary, had cracked his seeds and scattered the chaff over the writing-table, which was littered with worn out pens, blotted scraps of paper, pieces of pencil and a broken pen-knife or two; a bouquet of freshly gathered flowers stood in close proximity to a withered one; whilst the book shelves revealed a plethora of fairy tales; the "Lady of the Lake," Marmion, nearly all the Waverley novels, an odd volume of Sir Charles Grandison, and a half destroyed copy of Evelina.

"Why, May, you are fourteen, ain't you? You don't read fairy tales?" asked Frank, as he picked up the volume.

"Yes, I do, and like them, too; and if you don't choose to help me with my composition, you may leave the room," was the dogged reply.

Frank turned an amused look on the young girl, who was becoming a study to him, then seating himself beside her at the table, he proceeded with the essay. When it was finished, he turned around and was going to ask her for a kiss, as his reward, but, truth to say, she had a large mouth which was only redeemed from positive ugliness by a splendid set of teeth, and he concluded to waive his claim.

And so it came about, that Frank Thurlow was May Latimer's companion during all this pleasant weather; assisting her with her lessons; talking of his bright Southern home and his half brother, Paul Thurlow; or reading to her stirring poetry, beneath the old apple tree, till he felt the child's warm tears on his forehead, as he laid with his head in her lap, whilst she arranged bouquets and weaved wreaths of flowers.

May Latimer was never so happy. Eight long years before, her mother had died, when Katie was but a little baby, and May had treasured her memory as something too sacred to be spoken of, and, with childish enthusiasm, had devoted herself to her little sister. Mr. Latimer provided a governess for the children, one on whose intelligence and propriety he knew he could rely, and liberally supplied them with money; but with this he was satisfied. He never thought that they needed more demonstrative tokens of his love, and the indolent man shut himself up with his books, or attended to his estate, little heeding the affections he had thrown away.

Katie was still a very child, setting the whole house at naught in her wilfulness; but already

with May, the girl was rapidly merging into the woman from long years of solitary musing. Not that by any means she had entirely "put away childish things," but her sudden bursts of intellect or passion occasionally, would make even the impassible Mrs. Bailey raise her hands and eyes in horror.

But as we said, May Latimer was never so happy before. If she loved Sancho as much, she fondled him more quietly, and raced with him less than formerly, and little Katie was hired now to sit still by her side whilst Frank Thurlow read, by promises of chaplets of flowers or new dresses for her doll. Under Frank's teachings, the intellect, which had become torpid beneath Mrs. Bailey's cold reign, was suddenly awakened into life, and, with girlish bursts of song, May now went about the house.

The day of Frank's departure at last came. For a week May had felt a heavy, leaden oppression about the heart, only lightened by Frank's cordial good-bye and his parting words, "I'll write to you, lady bird, if you will promise to answer my letters."

After Thurlow's departure, May went to her room, threw herself on her bed and cried herself to sleep, but from that day forth she never mentioned his name, even to little Katie. The child sometimes would chatter about "that nice Mr. Thurlow," but her sister only answered in monosyllables, and applied herself with renewed vigor to her book.

Day after day May eagerly scanned the letters which were brought in from the post-office, but it was several months before her waiting was rewarded. At last it came.

"Miss May Latimer," said Mr. Latimer, looking at the superscription, "why, child, I didn't know you had an acquaintance off the estate," said her father, calmly, whilst his daughter was tapping her foot impatiently, and it required all her self-command to keep her from snatching the letter.

"Who is it from, May?" asked her father, looking over his spectacles.

"Please give it to me, papa," answered the young girl, with a flushed face, "Mr. Thurlow said he would write to me, you know; and this is the first letter I ever got," and May took up her precious epistle hurriedly, and escaped from the room.

It was an ordinary letter enough, containing reminiscences of Frank's pleasant summer visit; recording one or two innocent college pranks; advising May as to her reading, and giving her a list of books which she should study; and this was all; but the child slept with it under her

pillow at night, and carried it in her bosom by day.

Her answer was characteristic. From the "dear Mr. Thurlow" at the beginning, to "your sincere friend, May Latimer," at the conclusion, there had been no hesitation. It was a half girlish, half womanish outpouring of her heart. Home affairs were lightly touched upon. Katie, Sancho, her birds and flowers, were all mentioned. Then came critiques on books which she had read since his departure, thoughtful beyond her years, with an occasional appealing, "do not you think so, Mr. Thurlow?" But there was not a blot disfiguring the white paper. True, Mrs. Bailey had never been able to make the impetuous May Latimer write a fair, round, Italian hand, but notwithstanding the chicography, it looked neatly, and now no longer bore the untidy look it had formerly.

In vain the child looked for an answer to her letter; and at last the summer brought Frank Thurlow again. To the young collegian's eyes May was less hoydenish, but quite as awkward and homely as she had been the preceding year, yet she was his chief source of amusement, and her quick mind interested him, so he became her companion as he had been before. She was not sufficiently beautiful to fondle, though once or twice he imprinted a careless kiss on her forehead, which, she knew not why, sent the crimson tide flooding over neck and face.

With much the same outward bearing as formerly, with perhaps an increased gravity, May Latimer's character was rapidly maturing, and when Frank Thurlow bid her adieu at the end of that vacation, it was with a less passionate burst of tears, but a heavier weight at her heart that she now sought her room.

No letter came the succeeding winter to May, anxiously as she looked for it, but the next summer, which was to be his last at the North, again brought Frank Thurlow.

The May Latimer of the preceding years, though, was scarcely recognizable in the young girl who now received him. The awkward limbs had become beautifully rounded, the once sallow cheek, now mantled with the clear, bright hue of health; the mouth, somewhat large though it was, was beautifully formed, and very expressive; and the large, grey eyes, whether brightened by intellect or soft as the "brooding dove's" with feeling, had an irresistible charm for Frank Thurlow.

There was a shade of respect now in Frank's manner to the young girl, which made it all the more dangerous for her, and if he did occasionally endeavor to pass his arm around her waist,

during their walks, at the slightest sign of displeasure from her he would apologize, and call her his "cousin May."

This summer was passing much more pleasantly to him than the others had done, for the secluded girl of sixteen was fully a companion for the young collegian of twenty-two. A slight indisposition detained Frank at Mr. Latimer's till the autumn, and May was now looking forward with an undefined dread to the day of his departure, for the South.

It was a beautiful September day, and Frank Thurlow was reclining at full length on the sofa, turning over the leaves of a book which he held in his hand.

"Oh, say, May, come here," exclaimed he, "I want to read you this 'Locksley Hall,' of Tennyson's, and the speaker threw himself back on the sofa, passed his fingers through the bright curls which clustered in rings around his white forehead, and settled his elbows comfortably in the sofa cushion.

"In a moment," was the reply, "I must finish this game of battle-dove with Katie."

"What a baby Katie is," said the gentleman, pettishly, "the idea of two girls knocking a bunch of feathers backward and forward, as if their lives depended upon it. Serves you right for playing with her," continued he, as Katie, with a mischievous laugh, aimed her shuttlecock at May's face.

"Poor Mr. Methuselah," said the saucy Katie, mockingly. "'Pity the sorrows of a poor old man' of twenty-two," and going to the hearth-rug, she picked up a kitten which lay curled up comfortably, purring before the fire, and tossing it at Frank, left the room with a gay laugh.

With a grave smile May disengaged the kitten from Frank's shoulder, took a piece of sewing in her hand, and seated herself on a low footstool by the sofa. As the reading proceeded, the work gradually fell from her fingers, the various emotions called up by the finely modulated voice of the reader, chased each other rapidly over her face, and when Frank Thurlow had finished, he put his hand under her chin, and turning her face toward him, he saw her eyes were full of tears.

"A sad story, isn't it, May?" said he, as he stroked the heavy bands of her brown hair, but May, with her back still toward him, did not answer.

"It shan't be a 'twice-told tale,' shall it, my little cousin?" whispered the young man. "You know you must be my wife some of these days," and, as with a half smile, he imprinted a careless kiss on the forehead which he drew back toward



him, he was somewhat startled to see the new light which was flashing up in May Latimer's eyes. Still she did not answer, but with a slow step, as one in a dream, she left the room.

"I vow, I believe May *does* love me. Well, I have only been amusing myself with her, without intending any harm, but if I stay much longer I shall be caught in my own trap. She has grown to be a splendid looking girl—and what a woman she'll make. I wonder what Tyson and Benton, and the rest of the fellows would say to her;" and he stopped stroking the light moustache which encircled his well-formed mouth, and throwing his arms above his head, he settled himself comfortably, full length on the sofa, and fell into a reverie.

May Latimer in the meanwhile had sank into a large chair in the room above him. She scarcely stirred as she sat wrapped in her own thoughts gazing into vacancy. The vague dreams of the last two years seemed about to take a tangible shape, and occasionally half rising and pressing her hand against her heart, as if to still the voices of happy feelings there, like clamorous little birds in their nest, she would fall back again in her chair to dream on.

An hour or two passed thus. At last she descended the stairs to join Katie, who was out on the lawn, avoiding the parlor where she had left Frank with true womanly instinct, and enveloped, as it were, body and soul in the purple and golden haze of that glorious autumn afternoon.

The time was passing too rapidly now for May Latimer. Without a word more of love Frank's devotion was such as to satisfy the most exacting demands of a girl of sixteen. He was totally changed from the good-natured, indolent fellow he had been, and seemed, for the first time in his life, to be in earnest. The girl was too happy to care for words, when the sunlight of her own gladness was gilding every action of his, and so, for a time, she went on enveloped in her dream.

But this could not last. She began to *feel rather than think* that his light character gave back but the far-off echo of her own deeper nature, and with "the ache and hunger of love," her ear now craved something wherewith to satisfy her heart.

May was bending over her work one morning in the parlor, whilst Frank Thurlow was busy at his writing-desk. She had glanced up once or twice, and saw him smiling as he wrote, and presently he said,

"Oh, May, here's something about yourself, don't you feel flattered?"

"What is it?" asked the young girl, as a dark flush rose to her face.

"I've been writing to Burton. Here it is!"—and stretching out his feet and throwing himself back in his chair, he commenced reading—"you ask if time does not hang heavily on my hands here—not a bit of it, my old fellow. Mr. Latimer's place, you know, is but a few miles from Philadelphia, if I get dull at any time, but there is no fear of that with such a girl as May Latimer. She is a little beauty, Bob, and has tended me through all my sickness with the *tenderest* assiduity. I shall certainly marry her some day, but do not hint such a thing to Miss Grant, I beg of you."

At this last sentence, Frank looked up with a gay smile of confidence. He was about resuming the reading, when May stepped up to the table, placed her hand on the open letter, and said in a low, passionate voice,

"You need read no more, Mr. Thurlow. Put that letter directly in the fire, or *I* will."

"Why, cousin May, what's the matter?" asked Frank, astonished at her manner.

"Nothing at all, except that I do not choose to have my name laughed over and commented on by your college friends."

"But——" commenced Frank.

"Francis Thurlow, if I ever suspect there to be a repetition of this, I solemnly declare, our guest though you be, that I never speak to you again. Will you burn this?" and she pointed to the letter as she spoke.

"Why, May, don't be so unreasonable;" but May gave him no time to finish the sentence, for she said,

"Then, *I* will;" and taking up the closely written sheet of paper she crumpled it in her hand, then tossed it in the grate.

With tightly compressed lips, and flashing eyes, she leaned her head on the hand which held by the mantle shelf, and watched the paper till the blackened cinders with their crimson edges, turned into dusky white ashes.

With an embarrassed laugh, Frank said, as she turned away toward the window,

"Well, I hope you are satisfied, May, with that holocaust. What a little termagant you are, to be sure. If you don't improve, I don't think that I can marry you——"

"I do not think that you ever will," interrupted May, in a quiet voice.

From that time, till he left, Frank Thurlow could neither pique nor coax May into her old manner toward himself; she felt her love outraged, and she began to look upon him with a kind of contempt, and herself with pity, for having been enthralled so long.

During the three succeeding years, May Lati-

mer mingled much in society, but her one great mistake made her look with coldness and suspicion upon all who proffered their love.

Sometimes it was with a throb of fear, that she thought perhaps she was not entirely disenchanted yet, for in spite of her contempt for him, she had never met one since whom she thought Frank Thurlow's equal.

"May," called Mr. Latimer, one morning, as she was descending the steps of the piazza, garden gloves and scissors in hand.

"May, I've just received a letter from Frank Thurlow. He says that his brother and himself are coming North to spend the summer, and that they will pay us a visit the first thing. We may look for them in a few days, now. I wonder if Paul is as agreeable as Frank?"

"I don't know, sir," said May, absently, and she sat down on the piazza steps to still the beatings of her heart. She was frightened at the effect this communication had upon her. Her mind wandered back to the first day Frank ever noticed her, under the old apple tree in the orchard, and to his good-natured kindness in helping her with her lesson, and to the rambles, and readings, and all the thousand little things which had made the solitary child love him so, and it was with real anguish that she feared the spell again he had put upon her before.

The next day brought the brothers. With a calmness that astonished herself, after her late fears, May met Frank Thurlow. There was not a shade more color on her fair cheek, nor a tremor more in her voice, than if she had greeted the veriest stranger. The surprise, almost agitation, were all on Frank's side. He could scarcely realize that the ugly, awkward child of fourteen, or even the beautiful girl of sixteen, had grown into such a glorious woman. The three years in society had made May fully acquainted with the value of her beauty, and with a smile of almost satisfied revenge, she saw its effects on Frank Thurlow.

"May," said Frank, although it was with an effort that he now called her by her old familiar name,

"May, my brother Paul is a very clever fellow," said he, in his old gay manner, "but as you haven't found that out yet, I shall expect you to like him for my sake."

"I should be much more probable to like him for his own," was the quiet answer, with a bow to Paul.

Paul Thurlow cast a quick glance both at the speaker and his brother, and Frank turned away with an embarrassed laugh, for this was the lady who took matters so coolly, of whom he had

boasted to Paul, that she was terribly in love with him, and that he was coming North to propose to her.

But there soon grew to be for May Latimer a more dangerous fascination than Frank Thurlow's presence had ever caused. Day after day she found herself turning wearily from his exuberant, careless spirits, to his grave, dignified brother, for companionship. At night every word of Paul Thurlow's would be recalled, and with a thrill and a blush she would sometimes remember the expression of his dark eyes, or the gentle deference with which he bent over her at the piano, or assisted her in her walks.

The reveries of the woman were more dangerous than the girl's, for now the understanding as well as the feelings were enlisted, and it was with a scornful smile at herself that she blushed at her former infatuation.

As for Paul Thurlow, he was fascinated. It was impossible for a man of his temperament to live in such intimate companionship, as he had done, with a girl like May Latimer, and not to love her.

As for Frank, his demeanor toward his fair hostess, in the meanwhile, had gradually changed. He was losing his old careless, satisfied bearing, and becoming more anxious and deferential than he had been. He at last loved May as wildly as would have satisfied even her revenge, of which in her wounded pride she used to dream, but to which the true, deep love that was growing up in her heart for Paul Thurlow, made her now entirely indifferent.

"May," said Frank, one morning as they stood on the lawn together, "let us take one of our old strolls through the orchard, and down by the stream, where Sancho made a mat of your dress, you remember, years ago," added he, endeavoring to win his way, by the power of old associations.

May laughed, and turned in the direction of the orchard.

"How we have changed since then," continued her companion; but May did not reply, for she was wondering why Paul, whom she had seen standing at the parlor window, did not join them.

"I believe," said Frank, after a moment's silence, "that you go 'wool-gathering' just as much as you did in Mrs. Bailey's time. A very entertaining companion you seem likely to prove."

This recalled May to herself, and she endeavored to enter into conversation, but soon Frank fell into the reverie from which he had roused her. The two walked on in silence for some time, May stooping now and then to gather a

flower, while her companion switched off the head of a thistle, or a bunch of leaves with his cane.

At last he said, bending down his bright, eager face, and endeavoring to pass his hand around her waist,

"May, I love you, how much you can never know. Cousin May, is it in vain?"

"May's eyes filled with tears, for his voice had become so mournful, but she released herself from the arm which was encircling her waist, as she said,

"It is too late now, Frank; it is in vain."

"May, May, you will be my wife. This pique is childish. You have always loved me," and Frank bent forward to catch a glimpse of her face, as he spoke.

They had reached the old apple tree, by this time, and May seated herself on its gnarled root. Those unlucky words were closing her heart against him, by their reminiscences.

The flush which had spread over the girl's neck and face, settled into a crimson spot on each cheek, as she answered, with flashing eyes,

"Mr. Thurlow, you forget yourself. No power under Heaven would induce me to become the wife of so fickle a trifler as I consider you. You are mistaken, I never loved you. My childish infatuation, of which you are ungentlemanly enough to taunt me, *died out* the moment I was old enough to appreciate your true character. I soon discovered that you were far beneath me. I do not love you. You have my answer," and she attempted to rise from the seat as she spoke.

But Frank took her hand, and drew her down again, and said,

"May, you must love me. Till now, I did not know how long I had loved you. All those years"—but the indignant flush which was dying away from May's face, came back again, and her lips curled so scornfully, that Frank found all allusions to the past were worse than vain, so he took her hand, as he continued,

"May, will no probation, no years of effort to render myself worthy of you, change your feelings toward me? I swear to you, May Latimer, that I love you as never woman was loved before. Dear May, will you not give me the trial? Oh, May, will you not love me?"

With a voice as sad as his own, his companion answered,

"It is too late, now. I could not, if I would."

In a moment, without being able to extricate herself, his arm again encircled her waist, she was drawn closely to his bosom, two or three passionate kisses pressed upon her lips and brow, and with a "God bless you forever, May," Frank

Thurlow sprang up, crossed the stream by jumping from tussock to tussock of grass which grew in tufts in it, and disappeared in the woods on the opposite side.

For an hour May Latimer sat where Frank had left her, her head bowed in her arms, which rested on her lap, then she slowly arose and walked toward the house.

Paul Thurlow was standing by the window which commanded a view of the upper part of the orchard, but as soon as he saw May approach, he quickly left it, and, taking up a book, he seemed to be engrossed by it when she entered.

With all the egotism of love, and of his character, Frank Thurlow, entirely ignoring the possibility of his brother being at all interested in May, had confided his hopes to Paul, and had declared that that day should decide his fate.

With terrible anxiety, therefore, had the elder brother waited for the return of the two from the orchard, and with a heart bounding with joy, notwithstanding that his noble nature felt guilty of treachery to Frank, Paul saw May approach alone, pale and sorrowful.

It was in vain that the young girl endeavored to interest herself in her usual occupations, she could not sew, she could not read; and Paul, fearful of betraying his feelings, kept his eyes resolutely on his book. Of this, however, she was glad, for she felt it impossible to converse on indifferent topics just then, when she was sorrowing so much for Frank's disappointment, for to her the retribution seemed to be disproportioned to the fault; she thought she had suffered so little in comparison to what he did now.

Frank appeared at the dinner-table, but so different from the usually gay Frank Thurlow, that even the obtuse Mr. Latimer observed it, and asked if he was ill.

It was no surprise either to Mary or his brother, when Frank announced his intended departure on the next day. To his host he said that he was unexpectedly obliged to meet some friends in New York without delay, but to Paul, whom he sincerely loved and respected, he felt that another explanation was necessary.

That night whilst tumbling his things into his trunk, without looking up, he said with a sigh,

"I suppose you suspect why I am leaving, Paul?"

"Yes, Frank," was the reply.

"Paul," said Frank, rising from his stooping posture and looking at his brother, "I've been the greatest fool, the most conceited ass that ever breathed. I have trifled away the love of a woman who I verily believe has not her equal in the world, and I know too, that but for my

own egregious folly it might have been mine. She said I was not worthy of her, and I believe it was true. No one that I know is, but yourself, Paul. Why have you never fallen in love with her?"

For a moment Paul Thurlow felt as if he could not tell his brother what hopes were springing up from the ashes of his own love, but at last he said with an effort,

"I do love her, Frank, but I knew you had a prior claim to her, if she loved you. In no way have I been treacherous to you, my brother."

"It will be very hard, Paul, but you *are* worthy of her, I believe. I hope your suit may

be happier than mine has been," and he closed the conversation by beginning again to pack his trunk.

The next day Frank departed alone. May bid him farewell kindly, even affectionately, but that evening the moonlight rested on two figures in Mr. Latimer's parlor, and Paul Thurlow's arm quietly encircled the waist, from which Frank's had been so firmly dislodged the day before. With burning cheeks the young girl was frankly telling her lover of her girlish weakness, and how it was overcome, was shown by MAY LATIMER'S CHOICE.